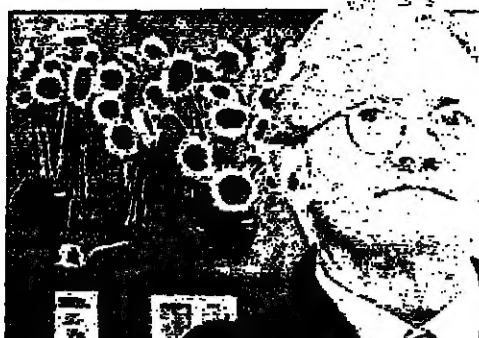


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**ALAN COREN'S
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Goodbye,
Prime Minister
...such a very
nice man
PAGE 18



Shepherd attack on Labour as education Bill is casualty of last-minute deal to clear decks

Tories forced to abandon school plans

By Philip Webster, Arthur Leathley and Janet Bush

FLAGSHIP plans to allow greater selection and the expansion of grant-maintained schools were sacrificed by the Government yesterday in the rush to clear the legislative decks before Parliament rises on Friday for the general election.

On the second day of the election campaign, Conservative business managers were forced, during negotiations with their Labour counterparts, to drop 19 clauses from the education Bill, including plans which they said would pave the way for a grammar school in every large town.

The Tories reacted angrily last night. Gillian Shepherd, the Education Secretary, claimed that Labour had "shown themselves in their true colours. However much they pretend, we now know what Labour really believes. They are opposed to excellence, opposed to choice, opposed to diversity, indifferent to standards of good behaviour."

She said that Labour had ignored the wishes of four out of five voters who want selection in schools.

The proposals were the main casualty of the horse-trading between the Labour and Tory whips, which was designed to get as much legislation through as possible before MPs depart.

In return, Labour has agreed to accept the Bill's proposal to extend to preparatory schools the assisted places scheme, which it is committed to phasing out.

Another minister said: "This

proves that Labour is against selection, apart from those members of the front-bench who want it for their own children."

The Government pledged, however, to bring back the proposals in its election manifesto and to make them a substantial campaigning

Regulation of supply teachers and reforms to the careers service will also survive under the whips' agreement.

In another deal last night, Labour agreed to allow through the crime Bill proposed by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary. However, it will support a Lords amendment giving judges more discretion over minimum sentences. The vote in Commons is expected tomorrow and it appears likely that the Government will be able to overturn the defeat it sustained last month.

Mrs Shepherd was also defeated over the education Bill last month, when peers supported moves that would require schools planning to increase selection to consult affected neighbouring schools. Any objections would trigger a local public inquiry. The Lords defeat came after MPs rejected government plans to relax controls on grant-maintained schools, allowing them to increase by 50 per cent the proportion of pupils selected by ability.

The behind-the-scenes manoeuvrings took place yesterday as the main parties began marking out the battle lines for the campaign.

Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, set out his plans to impose a windfall tax on the privatised utilities, although his refusal to name the companies affected was described as disgraceful by the Tories. Mr Brown claimed that a damning all-party report on

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TV WATCH

NICHOLAS WAPSHOTT

6 Blair was not flustered, but you could tell by his face that he is rarely spoken to like this. He is used to being applauded?

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theme. The bulk of the Bill's clauses will remain, including those increasing discipline, introducing home-school contracts between schools and parents. Ofsted inspection powers over local education authorities, assessments of children entering primary schools and targets for improving standards in schools.



Norma and John Major together on the campaign trail yesterday. Her smile waned as he toyed with racing car

Face that says I'd rather not be here

By Arthur Leathley
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NORMA MAJOR'S finely-honed "celebrity smile" vanished abruptly yesterday to reveal a persistently glum expression as her husband tried to inject a dash of glamour into the day-old election campaign.

John Major was clearly delighted at the prospect of meeting David Coulthard, Britain's most recent motor racing hero, and getting the chance to meddle with one of

the fastest cars on Earth. But his wife, after flashing an initial smile to waiting photographers, looked decidedly fed up with the rest of the visit to McLaren's Formula One racing plant in Surrey.

Whether she was suffering first-day campaign nerves or a wife's natural boredom in watching her husband fiddle with racing machines, her gloomy countenance did little to lighten the Tory campaign mood.

After an hour-long visit, Mrs Major fled the Woking plant in a separate car

from the Prime Minister, renewing Tory worries that she may not be an eager traveller on the campaign trail.

Mr Major's trip was primed by Tory strategists to conjure up images of racing starts, victories and even a little sporting machismo. Instead, the day was marred by minor mishaps.

The media on the Tory campaign battle-bus travelled towards the McLaren factory with appetites whetted by promises that Coulthard's

Australian Grand Prix-winning car would be "fired up". Their enthusiasm waned on arrival. The shell of the car, without wheels, was balanced precariously on a pair of trestles.

Undaunted, Mr Major strode to the gleaming machine with all the purpose of a racing champion. Alas, the detachable steering wheel came off in his hands.

When he tried to talk about privatised rail cancellations, his speech was drowned — by a passing high-speed train.

Cabinet ministers lose fast track to the Lords

By Our Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR is preparing to break with tradition by declining to give life peerages to all the former senior ministers retiring at the general election.

In a move that will send a tremor down the long list of ministers counting on a second career in the House of Lords, the Prime Minister has indicated that he believes life peerages should go to senior figures likely to carry on working — and voting — for the Conservative cause in the Upper House. Those thought more likely to devote most of their time to business could be disappointed.

It has been a long-standing convention that Cabinet service guarantees a peerage — Sir John Nott, Defence Secretary during the Falklands war, was one of very few not to be so honoured.

But Mr Major has been disappointed by the voting records of some ennobled in 1992 and he now wants to shift the approach, using life peerages to reward loyalty and long service in important backbench posts.

He has a limited number of peerages at his disposal and does not believe that former ministers who regularly rebel against the Government from the backbenches should have a claim ahead of hard-working MPs who have backed a prime minister through thick and thin. It has also been noted that several former MPs who did not reach the Cabinet, such as Lord Clark of Kempston, have been excellent attenders in the Lords.

Win or lose on May 1, Mr Major will be responsible for June's dissolution honours

Continued on page 2, col 7

Surgeon shot over 'nothing'

Benjamin Dalton, a 29-year-old British surgeon, was shot dead in an argument "over nothing" with policemen at a checkpoint in the Congo.

Diana Dalton said: "Benjamin grabbed me by the arms and said 'Run'. I heard a number of shots and thought 'My God they are going to kill us'. I saw Benjamin fall. I bent down to him and saw the blood running down his back. He just opened his eyes and died in my arms."

Page 3

Soap star

Sid Shaw won his High Court battle against America's Elvis Presley industry for the right to carry on selling Presley novelties from his east London shop. The judge liked Mr Shaw's soap so much that he took a bar home.

Page 7

Thatcher archive to join Churchill's at Cambridge

By Alan Hamilton

BARONESS THATCHER announced yesterday that she is giving her archive of personal and political papers on permanent loan to Churchill College, Cambridge, to allow scholars to study the longest premiership of the 20th century.

More than 1,000 boxes of documents, videos, photographs and personal effects will be handed over for safe keeping in the college strongrooms, where they will join the archive of Lady Thatcher's hero, Sir Winston Churchill. The Thatcher Foundation has been keeping the documents at its London office while their owner wrote her memoirs and has rebuffed many approach-

es from American universities and other foreign institutions anxious to possess an important slice of modern history.

Lady Thatcher said yesterday that she had always wanted her papers to remain in Britain. "I am therefore delighted that they are going to Churchill College, where they will join the papers of many distinguished 20th-century figures, including of course those of Sir Winston Churchill himself. I hope they will be a valuable source for students and scholars who wish to study the great changes brought about by the governments that I had the privilege to lead."

Scholars will not, however, have immediate and unlimited access to the papers. Many will be covered by the Government's 30-year rule on the opening of state papers and historians anxious to unearth the secrets of the Falklands War, the poll tax revolt or the 1984 miners' strike — three milestones of the Thatcher era likely to be of particular interest — will have to be patient or persuade the Cabinet Office to make exceptions.

The Thatcher Foundation is anxious to avoid the debacle that surrounded the Churchill archive two years ago, when Sir Winston's grandson and

Continued on page 2, col 4

Zaire braced for military takeover

From Sam Kiley in Kinshasa

THE prospects of a military coup in Zaire grew yesterday after the Parliament passed a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister.

Opposition MPs said they had the backing of military leaders and would appoint a successor to Leon Kengo wa Dondo "very soon".

At the same time, several members of President Mobutu Sese Seko's family were reported to have fled across the River Congo to Brazzaville, apparently fearing that they would be priority targets either for the army or a popular uprising in support of the rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

The President is being treated for cancer in Monaco.

Mr Kabila's forces are about 200 miles east, but the tension after the rebels' weekend victory at Kisangani is a further sign that Mr Mobutu's 31-year rule is close to an end.

The vote against Mr Kengo — who left for talks in Nairobi yesterday — narrowly missed the three quarters majority necessary to remove him from office, but opposition leaders said that his administration would be unable to function as they would ask the army to take over the central bank.

Many believe that the military could fill the vacuum left by a government unable to run the war effort and forbidden by the President from negotiating with Mr Kabila.

Apples lose their appeal as Britons go bananas

By Michael Hornsby
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

BANANAS, once an exotic luxury item, have replaced apples as Britain's most popular fresh fruit, with about five billion eaten every year.

It is a far cry from the dark days of the Second World War when beleaguered Britons had to satisfy their craving for the fruit with a concoction of mashed parsnips flavoured with sugar and banana essence. Bananas were unavailable from 1939 to 1945, and for children born during those years, the fruit was such a novelty that the Attlee Government distributed one free to everyone under the age of 15 when the first postwar supplies arrived.

The banana-eating habit recovered strongly, but really took off only in the past 15 years when the fruit was marketed as a convenient health food that was high in energy and low in calories. The average banana contains three times as much potassium as any other fruit, carotene and vitamins A, B6 and E.

Consumption of bananas averaged 185g per person per week last year, compared with 175g for apples, according to a report by the Ministry of Agriculture. Until last year, apples had held the top position since records began in 1940. Now, however, Britons are eating an average two bananas a week compared with one apple.

Bananas — strictly speaking, a species

of herb rather than a tree — are among the oldest cultivated plants in the world. They are thought to have originated in South-East Asia and are mentioned in a Buddhist text dating from around 600 BC.

Alexander the Great was probably the first European to eat a banana, tasting the fruit in India during his voyages of conquest. Arab traders are credited with bringing bananas to the Holy Land, Egypt and Africa. The word *banana* is Arabic for "finger". By the 16th century the fruit had reached the Caribbean.

Bananas came to Europe only in the late-19th century after the emergence of the refrigerated steam ship. The first commercial consignment of 20,000 bunches landed in September 1888.

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Surgeon 'died in my arms'

Wife tells how husband was shot dead in Congo

By BILL FROST

A BRITISH surgeon died in his wife's arms after being shot at a remote police checkpoint in the Congo when he argued with armed policemen, his family disclosed yesterday.

Benjamin Dalton's widow, Diana, a member of the six-strong party heading overland for South Africa, described how she called out his name as he lost consciousness. "He just opened his eyes and died in my arms," she said.

"We had reached a checkpoint at Sembe [50 miles from the border with Cameroon]. An argument started - it was over nothing," she said.

"Then one or two of the policemen started to become angry and began threatening us with their guns. Benjamin grabbed me by the arms and said 'run'. I heard a number of shots and thought 'My God, they are going to kill us'."

"I saw Benjamin fall. I bent down to him and saw the blood running down his back."

Mr Dalton, 29, is believed to have argued with police at the checkpoint over their demand for a bribe in return for safe onward passage. However, a Foreign Office spokesman said it was unclear what



sparked the argument or whether it was a Congolese policeman who killed Mr Dalton.

Before leaving Britain yesterday for the capital Brazzaville, the dead man's father said that his son had taken issue with a truculent official at the checkpoint. Bill Dalton, a schools inspector from Peckham in southeast London, said that his daughter-in-law had told him by telephone that a young official with a Kalashnikov was being objectionable and overbearing. "Ben said he was going to report him. He should have known better; he has been on the road before."

Mr Dalton said that his son was chased by policemen after the argument. "Someone else, we do not know who, shot Ben through the heart," he added. He said that his son and

daughter-in-law had wanted to spend time travelling overland from London to South Africa before professional commitments and family life tied them to Britain.

It is thought that Ben Dalton, recently qualified as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, died instantly after being shot in the chest.

Mr Dalton's brother, Will, 26, said last night that the family were aghast at the stupidity of the killing. He dismissed as "unbelievable" a suggestion that the row with the policeman had been sparked by his brother.

"Ben was an experienced traveller and he was used to paying bribes. He was not silly or naive."

Before leaving for Africa, Mr Dalton had been working at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, east London. He trained there and was made a houseman in 1992. He was later employed there as a general surgeon before leaving in October 1996 to travel.

Robert Ham, consultant general surgeon at the Royal London, said: "He excelled as a keen, caring and expert clinician and was a skilled and committed surgeon with his whole career in front of him."

Mr Dalton had also worked as a senior house officer in the casualty department for the Mid Essex Health Authority in 1993. He then moved to the Oldchurch Hospital, Romford, Essex, from 1993 to 1995.

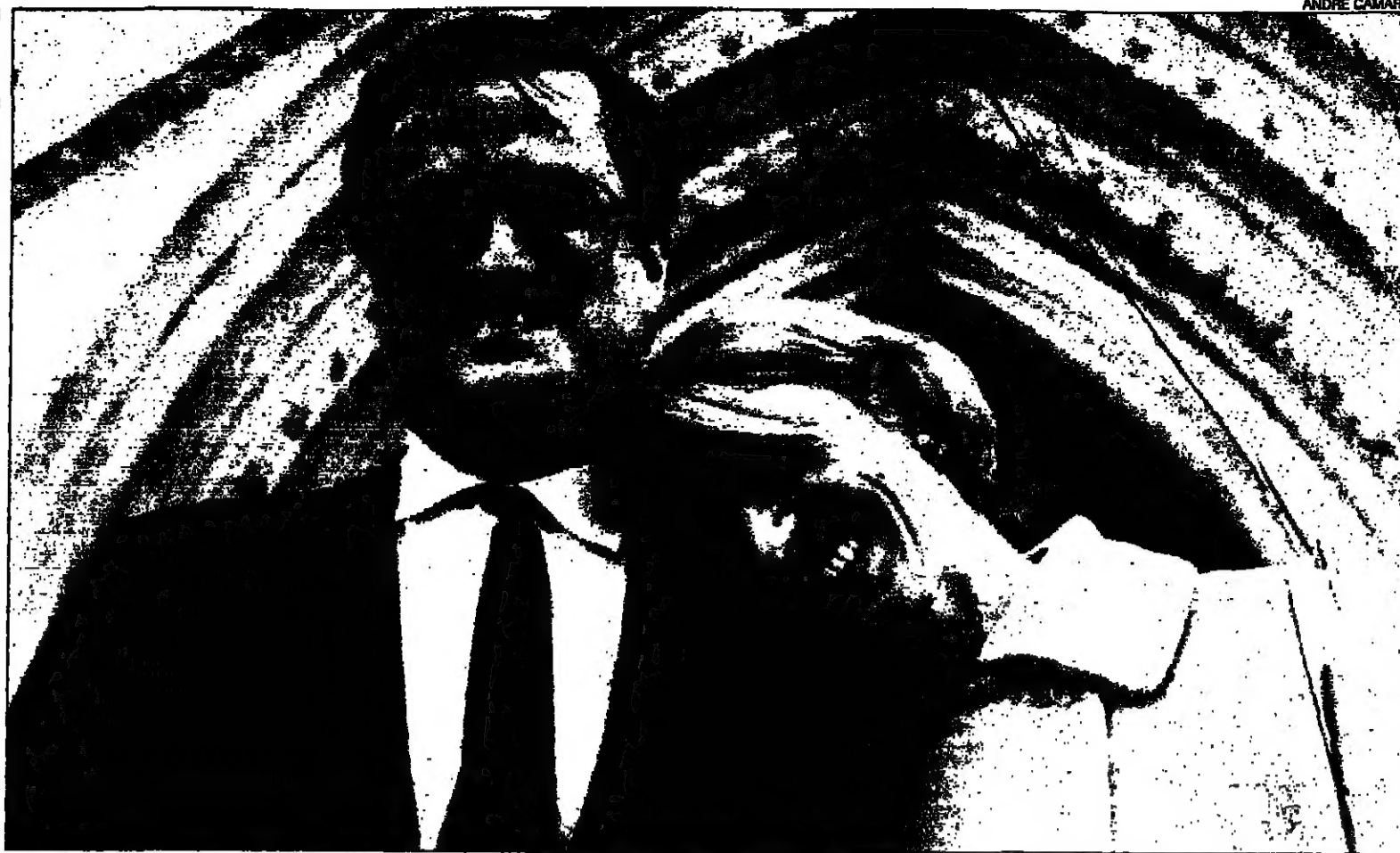
The Daltons lived in a flat in southeast London, near Tower Bridge. Tom Bingham, the manager, said that although the surgeon was "a very busy man he always had time and a good word for everyone."

The west London specialist travel firm Trailfinders said yesterday that the Daltons had taken out a worldwide insurance policy lasting for eight months.

The Foreign Office has called for a full report on Mr Dalton's death from the Congolese authorities. Britain does not have an embassy in the country so the inquiry is being co-ordinated by diplomats in Zaire.

The dead man's widow and parents were last night met by a British honorary consul in Brazzaville. It is unclear when Mr Dalton's body will be released to his family.

The Foreign Office has repeated a warning that tourists could be at risk from bandits in some areas of the Congo. While Brazzaville was "generally quiet", visitors were advised to be very careful on the streets at night.



Richard Wilmot-Smith and his wife, Jenny, outside the High Court after the case. Mr Wilmot-Smith said it was not a time for triumphalism

Telegraph faces £850,000 bill over libel

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

Paper falsely accused QC and psychic wife of brainwashing solicitor into leaving family

THE Daily Telegraph last night faced a £850,000 bill for damages plus legal costs of well over £500,000 after a jury found it had libelled a barrister and his psychic healer wife by claiming that they had brainwashed a solicitor into leaving his family.

The High Court jury awarded £250,000 to Richard Wilmot-Smith, QC, 44, a leading commercial barrister, and £100,000 to his wife, Jenny, 48. The couple had sued over an article of March 1995, entitled Dark Side of the New Age, about "a case of alternative therapy that left a happy family in tatters".

The jury also found for the solicitor, Stephen Kirby, 41, a partner in the London firm of Reynolds Porter Chamberlain, who sued the Telegraph in a separate related action.

His damages will not be assessed until today.

In a case described by George Carman, QC, for the Telegraph, as "exposing human nature in the raw", the newspaper alleged that the Wilmot-Smiths had brainwashed Mr Kirby after he sought the psychic healer's help in curing him of agonising headaches. The article stated that ten months after starting sessions with Mrs Wilmot-Smith, Mr Kirby demanded a divorce from his wife Clare, 41, whom he accused of causing his headaches.

The judge had told the jury that they faced the task of deciding whether Mrs Wilmot-Smith was acting as a "good samaritan or a wicked witch". Mrs Kirby, who is awaiting a divorce, had claimed in court that Mrs Wilmot-Smith was a charlatan. She claimed that the couple effectively held him hostage at their home in Sevenoaks, Kent.

But Mrs Wilmot-Smith claimed that she merely acted as a befriender. She denied that she had forbidden Mr Kirby to see his wife and said she had urged him to talk to her about their relationship. Her psychic guidance had been used to treat her husband's headaches but since then she had been unable to help him.

while she sought to clear her name. She and her husband said that the article, which was next to one about cults and sects, robbed them of their integrity.

Patrick Moloney, for Mr Kirby, said that the claim that he was a "hypnotised puppet" was a serious libel of a respected professional. Mr Kirby, from Islington, north London, said that sexual difficulties in his marriage and the birth of his children had led him into three affairs that left him feeling guilty.

Mr Wilmot-Smith, a commercial lawyer and part-time judge who represented himself and his wife in the action,

said afterwards: "This case has been very much in the public eye in respect of matters which ought to have been private at all times. It's been a test for everybody, not just us but our opponents and the Kirby family. This is certainly not a time for triumphalism."

Mr Justice Roullet put a stay of execution of £100,000 on Mr Wilmot-Smith's damages and £25,000 on his wife's pending an appeal. Mr Carman said he would argue that the damages should be reduced in line with guidance laid down in the case of Elton John, whose libel award in November 1993 of £350,000 was reduced to £75,000.

A spokesman for the newspaper said: "We very much hope that those members of the Kirby family who have found themselves on opposite sides will in due course be reconciled."



Benjamin and Diana Dalton on their wedding day

Man killed after row with youths

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A MAN who went to the aid of a disabled woman being taunted by a gang of youths was killed and beaten to death early yesterday.

Michael Stevenson, 43, who was attending a St Patrick's night celebration at a club in Langley, Berkshire, saw the youths intimidating the woman and told them to stop but was ignored. One witness said that Mr Stevenson, from Langley, headbutted one of the youths, which resulted in further threats.

When he left the club later the gang was waiting outside and attacked him. Mr Stevenson, a security guard who was separated from his wife and had a 15-year-old son, was taken to hospital in Slough but was certified dead on arrival.

Two men aged 20 and 22 from the Slough area were being held in custody last night.

Killer of bullying father walks free

By A STAFF REPORTER

A MAN who killed his bullying father after the family had been subjected to years of physical and mental abuse walked free from the Old Bailey yesterday. Malcolm McCarthy, 26, stabbed his father Terence, 53, eight times in the chest.

The court was told that Mr McCarthy had threatened to kill his wife Sylvia and daughter Megan, 23, shortly before his death. Judge Denison, QC, the Common Serjeant of London, said McCarthy had acted to protect his sister.

McCarthy admitted manslaughter on the grounds of provocation. He was given a two-year jail sentence, suspended for two years, after the judge said there were "wholly exceptional circumstances".

The court was told that Malcolm McCarthy, who was described as "a gentle giant", tried to avoid arguments with his father. On the night of the

killing the father came home drunk and abused his family. Neighbours in Deptford, southeast London, heard him shouting: "Come and get it if you want. I'm going to do you all."

The father then got a knife from his bedroom. Richard Horwell, for the prosecution, said: "Malcolm ran to the kitchen and got himself a knife. He stood in front of Megan and said to his father, 'Drop the knife.' Then he confronted his father face to face in the hallway." He immediately confessed to police.

Judge Denison said: "Plainly you were acting on a sudden impulse, motivated to start with by the entirely understandable desire to protect your sister from your father. But then you suffered what must have been a momentary but overwhelming loss of control."

Smoking gun bags £5,000 fine

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A DRUNKEN marketing executive who frightened passengers and staff at a remote railway station with his antique shotgun was fined £5,000 yesterday.

Alexander MacKinnon, 27, pointed the double-barrelled weapon, worth about £30,000, at a guard after being ordered off a Glasgow to Fort William train for smoking.

MacKinnon, of Kensington, London, had been on his way to join wealthy friends in the Highlands for a shooting party. Stirling Sheriff Court

was told that the guard asked him to leave the train, and threw his luggage after him, when he ignored repeated warnings to stop smoking.

MacKinnon said that he had removed the gun from its leather case and assembled the stock and barrel to check if it had been damaged. The rare gun had belonged to his grandfather.

MacKinnon pleaded guilty to placing people in fear and alarm at Crianlarich station, Stirling. He also admitted being drunk in charge of a

weapon. He was fined and ordered to do 200 hours' community service. Sheriff Alexander Eccles said the weapon, currently in police custody, would not be confiscated provided it was passed to another member of the family.

The court was told that MacKinnon learnt to shoot at the age of eight on his father's estate in Oxfordshire. He was not carrying ammunition at the time of the offence. His gun licence may now be revoked.

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CDs are new weapon in supermarket price war

BY ADRIAN LEE

A PRICE war has erupted between supermarkets which are offering big discounts on Top 40 compact discs in an effort to win a larger share of the lucrative music market.

The cost of some chart albums has been cut to less than £10 as chains including Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury compete to encourage customers to buy their food and music under the same roof.

The aggressive discounting has upset traditional music outlets but has been welcomed by consumer groups. Asda is now the fourth-biggest music retailer and has seen nearly a 25 per cent rise in music sales in the past year. Tesco claims its chart CD prices are the cheapest in the country.

"Marketing opportunities on the food side are more difficult, so supermarkets are looking at other areas," an Asda spokesman said. Its biggest stores now stock more than 2,000 titles and it is introducing signing sessions where customers can hear albums before they buy.

A Tesco spokesman said: "We are taking CD sales extremely seriously. All our research shows that custom-

HOW PRICES COMPARE



Definitely Maybe, Oasis	
Asda	£11.99
Tesco	£13.99
Sainsbury	£15.99
Woolworths	£14.99
Virgin	£13.99
HMV, New York	£10.85
FNAC, Paris	£15.90

ers now want to buy CDs, books and videos while they are doing their food shopping." The store said yesterday that it would cut the price of the Spice Girls album *Spice* by £2 to £10.99 after learning that Asda was charging £10.99. This week Sainsbury is offering two Top 10 CDs for £20.

A source at one high street record shop said: "There is no

range of albums they stocked. A typical Our Price shop has 10,000 titles. A spokesman for Virgin and Our Price added: "You are not going to get specialist knowledge from a Tesco check-out girl."

Phil Evans, senior policy officer for the Consumers' Association, welcomed the price battle. "Supermarkets are to be congratulated for being so aggressive on price. The record companies and high street record shops have been allowed to get away with high prices for too long."

He said there was no evidence that supermarket price-cutting in the United States had harmed the music industry there. US prices are generally two thirds of those in Britain.

In 1994 the Monopolies and Mergers Commission cleared record companies of overcharging and collusion. The companies say the price difference in Britain and the US is comparable to other goods.

The CD trade has grown to £800 million a year since its launch in 1983. The retailer receives £4.05 from a CD costing £14.99; the record company gets £5.07; the manufacturer £1.05; producer 46p; publisher 46p; artist 98p; composer 68p; VAT £2.24.

way they can be making money on some of these prices. The supermarkets are just going for chart stuff so ultimately it will be bad for the music industry because some smaller shops could be forced out of business." Another specialist store said: "The supermarkets are being irresponsible. It is worrying for us."

Shops such as Virgin and Our Price emphasised the



The Restorick family stand in silence at the checkpoint where Stephen was shot dead by an IRA sniper

Family visit spot where soldier died

THE parents of Stephen Restorick, the young soldier who was shot dead by an IRA sniper in Northern Ireland last month, yesterday visited the spot where he was killed (Nicholas Watt writes).

John and Rita Restorick fought back tears as they laid flowers at the checkpoint in the village of Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, where their son died on the evening of February 12. Accompanied by relatives, including their other son, Mark, and two army officers, Mr and

Mrs Restorick walked hand-in-hand to the checkpoint where 50 floral tributes have been tied to a fence in memory of the 23-year-old lance bombardier. After standing in silence for a few minutes, Mrs Restorick stepped forward to lay a simple spray of flowers with the message: "Dear Son and Brother. We miss you now and forever. Love Mum, Dad and Mark." The family, from Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, then walked along the road out of Bessbrook and looked over the hillside from where the IRA sniper is believed to have fired.

Later at the army base they attended a service to dedicate a memorial to their son. Forty members of the soldier's Eagle Battery from the 3rd Battalion Royal Horse Artillery joined them. The Rev John Ritson, the army chaplain, said the presence of troops in the Province allowed people to live without intimidation. "Stephen's life was lost actually fighting for the freedom of others."

Train drivers told to ignore body to prevent delays

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE body of a young woman was left lying on a railway track for nearly four hours so that rush-hour services would not be delayed. Up to 20 train drivers were ordered to take their trains over her.

Yesterday the train drivers' union Aslef said that their members were "traumatised" by the incident on Great Eastern line between Shenfield and Southend in Essex. The union accused the rail operator of being motivated by the need to avoid penalty payments for delays.

However, Great Eastern said that the decision to keep trains running was taken in co-operation with police and Railtrack in the interests of rush-hour travellers. In the

Commons, Gwyneth Dunwoody, a Labour member of the Transport Select Committee, called for a government statement on the incident, which she described as "barbarism".

The woman had been knocked down by a train at about 5.15am on February 6. Her body was removed at about 9am.

Revealing the incident yesterday, Lew Adams the Aslef general secretary, said in the union's *Locomotive Journal*: "Some 15 to 20 drivers had the traumatic experience of being instructed to pass over her body, lying in the 4ft between the rails with just a cover thrown over it. All this was done to preserve profit and

avoid incurring penalty payments if the service was delayed.

"Just how sick and uncaring can this new regime of the privatised railway become?"

A Great Eastern spokesman said: "There was no question of any profit motive being involved in this. The decision to pass above the body was taken by ourselves, Railtrack and the police in the interests of rush-hour travellers who otherwise would have faced very severe delays. The decision was in keeping with the old British Rail rule book regulation concerning bodies on the line. Any affected drivers could have completed special forms, but so far none has been submitted."

Birmingham Six sue MP Evans

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE Birmingham Six issued a writ for libel yesterday on the Conservative MP David Evans over comments he allegedly made in an interview with sixth formers in his constituency.

Benedict Birnberg, solicitor for the six men, said they had been severely distressed by remarks that appeared to question their innocence of terrorist incidents.

He added: "We are seeking damages and an injunction preventing him from saying these things again."

Mr Birnberg said that he had written to Mr Evans earlier this month, but when no reply was received, a writ was issued and served on Mr Evans's solicitors. The scale of

the damages to be sought would depend on Mr Evans's attitude from this point, he said.

Mr Evans, Conservative MP for Welwyn and Hatfield, North Hertfordshire, talked to pupils last month at Stanborough School in Welwyn Garden City.

During his address he reportedly criticised John Major as "vindictive and not forgiving" and labelled Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, as "dead from the neck upwards", a remark for which he later apologised.

The Birmingham Six - Gerry Hunter, Paddy Hill, Hugh Callaghan, Richard McKinnon, Billy Power and Johnny Walker - spent 17 years in prison until the Court of Appeal quashed their convictions in 1991.

Their lawyers are seeking a judicial review to finalise compensation claims for the time they spent in jail wrongly convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings.

Last week it emerged that Mr Hunter had been offered £310,000. Mr Birnberg said: "Their compensation has still not been settled, although substantial interim payments have been made."

Gasworks bomb man has case sent to Appeal Court

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE case of a petty thief serving 16 years for his part in an IRA bomb attack is to be reviewed by the Court of Appeal after new evidence was sent to the Home Office.

John Kinsella, who is in Full Sutton top-security jail near York, has served three years of a sentence imposed for storing explosives for an IRA cell that blew up the Warrington gasworks in 1993. Kinsella, 52, has protested his innocence ever since his conviction in 1994 for possession of Semtex. He had hidden the explosives for his nephew, Denis MacPholain, under a place for bonfires on a friend's allotment, for £200.

John Kinsella, from Nottingham, who was originally from Dublin and had lived in Britain for 30 years, claimed that he had not known that the bag he hid contained 7.5kg of Semtex, and guns and ammunition, which was why he buried them under a place used for bonfires. He says that he had thought the bag contained silverware.

He was originally jailed for 20 years for his part in the bomb attack but that was reduced on appeal to 16. The



John Kinsella: "did not know about Semtex"

latest hearing of the case is expected in the autumn.

Michael McCloskey, his solicitor, said yesterday that new material had been put to the Home Office relating to whether Kinsella was aware that

what he hid was explosives. Lawyers will also argue that a photograph of Kinsella's son standing in front of a plaque commemorating the death of Louis Scallion, an IRA man, shot in 1972, should not have been used at the trial as it was prejudicial.

Mr McCloskey said: "The picture had no political meaning for Mr Kinsella and was just for background to link him with the IRA. It is the kind of picture you would see in

many nationalist homes in Ireland."

Yesterday Paddy Loftus, the leader of the campaign to have the case referred to the Appeal Court said: "We have always strived to expose the truth and now we are happy that Michael Howard [the Home Secretary] has made the decision to refer this case back to the Court of Appeal and look at all the facts again. All we have asked is for the full facts of the case to be put in front of the courts. Mr Howard has facilitated this process and we are grateful."

Two years ago Kinsella's sentence was reduced on the grounds that the original term did not reflect the fact that he was unconnected with the IRA. At the appeal, a letter from MacPholain was given as evidence. It said Kinsella had been enlisted to support the cell because he was a "petty criminal who would do anything for money".

MacPholain, an IRA bomb-maker, is serving 35 years for leading the bombing mission that devastated Warrington gasworks. Denis Kinsella is serving 25 years. MacPholain, 43, a researcher with a firm of lawyers in Dublin, had prepared the bombs in a flat in Nottingham where Denis Kinsella lived.

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Abusive episode lands Australian neighbour in court

BY A STAFF REPORTER

AN Australian who moved to England in search of a country idyll forgot the advice of his country's successful soap opera that good neighbours should be good friends - and abused them instead.

Ollie Kingspark, delivered angry tirades over the garden fence, posted offensive placards complaining of racism, and kicked in the door of his rented 17th-century cottage in the hamlet of Turligh, Wiltshire.

Kingspark, 45, his wife Georgina, 43 and their two children emigrated to England in 1995 to open a lingerie shop in Bath and moved into a honey-coloured hillside property in Turligh, population 120. Within weeks they had fallen foul of the Curtis family next door after complaining about their bonfire.

Kingspark is said to have sworn at the Curtis children, disrupted their barbecue and erected a sign saying "Australian family discriminated against by racist village". When Malcolm Curtis called to try to resolve the feud, Kingspark swore and called him a "wimp and pommie" and then pushed him.

West Wiltshire magistrates were told yesterday that such was Kingspark's behaviour

during the barbecue that parents refused to allow their children to stay in tents in the garden overnight. Four months later the Kingsparks were evicted from their property but returned and kicked in the door.

Kingspark, who admitted two public order offences, criminal damage and assaulting his neighbour, was ordered to serve 101 hours' community service, pay £487 compensation for damage and £80 costs.

James Morton, for Kingspark, said the couple were desperate to return to Australia and denied ever hurling abuse at their neighbours. "Mr Kingspark incurred severe racial discrimination because he and his wife are Australian."

Kingspark, who now lives in Upper Borough Walls, Bath, Somerset, said: "I came to England seeking the country life: the idyllic type of thing me and my wife thought existed in the areas where we had been living."

"Large numbers of people didn't want us here. I came from a multicultural nation where we accept other people - but you English are the most xenophobic people I have come across."

Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse, MP

A Diary report (March 13) claimed Sir Geoffrey Lofthouse was to retire as MP for Poynton and Castleford to make way for Alan Howarth when the general election was called. A news report on Monday

repeated the suggestion of his impending retirement. Both reports were incorrect. We accept that Sir Geoffrey has no intention of standing down, and apologise for the embarrassment he has been caused.

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Cricket boss stumped as behind is caught in beach competition

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

MEMBERS of the country's oldest first-class cricket club whose eyes strayed from *Wisden* in the off-season were surprised to find the nude figure of their beleaguered club secretary gracing the pages of *British Naturism* magazine.

On the eve of Sussex County Cricket Club's annual general meeting, Nigel Bett's naked appearance in the glossy quarterly has distracted attention from his efforts to stop the club committee being swept away by a new regime.

Mr Bett, 57, posed for his wife Barbara on a beach in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, wearing just a strategically placed black-and-white scarf. They entered the picture in an annual *British Naturism* competition offering £100, £50 and £25 prizes for the best photograph by a reader.

Although they failed to land a prize, the picture proved ideal to illustrate an article by another naturist on the joys of strolling naked among the island's drifting sand dunes and shrub-covered hillocks.

The chances of identification were slim. Mr Bett appeared from the rear only, was not named, and the magazine has a circulation of just 12,000 members who pay the £20 family or £16 single subscription. However, one keen-eyed reader spotted his wife Barbara's name in the



Bett: "What people do in private life is up to them"

caption and alerted the *Brighton Evening Argus* newspaper, which featured the story prominently under the headline: "Checky pic leaves Nigel blushing."

Mr Bett admitted all, telling the paper: "This is a picture of me. It was taken by my wife. It is a place where people can sunbathe with their clothes off. I think what people do in their private lives is up to them."

Yesterday he did not turn up for work at the club, where

weightier matters were under discussion. The former Sussex fast bowler Tony Pigott is trying to overthrow the board with a motion of no confidence, which will be raised at today's meeting and formally discussed at an extraordinary general meeting on April 8.

Sussex, founded in 1839, has never won the county champ-

ionship and was last runner-up in 1981. Its committee has long faced accusations of mis-handling players and the club has recently fallen into crisis with the loss of six senior cricketers during the winter.

Mr Pigott said he had no plans to raise the nude picture at either meeting: "There are more serious matters facing Sussex, such as achieving the vote of no confidence and getting new faces and new ideas on the committee."

However, one angry member despaired at yet another round of unfavourable publicity: "This is the last thing we need. He should not be entering nude pictures in magazine competitions. He is supposed to be an ambassador for Sussex County Cricket Club."

Robert Griffiths, the club's marketing director, said: "I am not aware that we have received any complaints from our members. Our primary concern is to prepare for the meeting."

County in turmoil, page 48



Pete Townshend leaving the High Court yesterday

The Who guitarist clashes with lawyer for Bowbelle

PETE TOWNSHEND, leader of The Who, was accused yesterday of exaggerating the potential of a musician whose career was destroyed by the *Marchioness* riverboat disaster in order to boost her claim for compensation (Kathryn Knight writes).

Josephine Wells, 37, has been unable to work as a saxophone player since being trapped underwater for three minutes when the pleasure cruiser collided with the sand dredger *Bowbelle* on the Thames in August 1989.

Mr Townshend, 53, told the High Court that Ms Wells was an "absolutely exceptional" musician, "the best soprano saxophone player I have ever heard in pop", and that she could have expected to earn up to £3,000 a week.

But Grahame Aldous, for the owners of the *Bowbelle*, said the guitarist's estimate of Ms Wells's earnings was the "best possible scenario". He said: "You are known as a man who glides the lily, as a man whose statements do not always tie to the fact of the matter."

Mr Townshend replied angrily: "I may have had something of a reputation in the past but I am making this



Wells: has been unable to work since tragedy

statement under oath. I am 53 years old. I am a mature individual. I'm aware of what I'm telling you. I did not contribute to my biography under oath otherwise I would spend my life under oath.

"I am somebody with the experience of the best possible scenario. This is always a possible reality to someone who is as unique and special as is Jo."

Mr Townshend was giving evidence on the second day of a damages claim by Ms Wells against the owners of the *Marchioness* and *Bowbelle*. The court has been told that Ms Wells suffered severe

depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and had turned to alcohol since the disaster. In the 1980s she had toured with The Communards and Tears for Fears.

Mr Townshend said yesterday: "Jo really stuck in my mind. She was absolutely exceptional both technically and imaginatively. She was the best soprano saxophone player I have ever heard in pop, an unassuming figure who burst into life when she was playing."

Since working with her on a session for an album in 1986, he told Mr Justice Kay, he had been quite intimidated by how good Ms Wells was and had never forgotten her. "I was constantly looking out for her. I always wanted to know what she was up to," he said.

He added that he had written 20 hit records with The Who in a career that began in 1963, and had become a good judge of musicianship.

The owners of *Marchioness* and *Bowbelle* accept liability but are contesting the amount of damages, claiming Ms Wells was burnt out before the accident and had not played professionally for 18 months. The case continues.

Film censor gives green light to Crash

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A CONTROVERSIAL film which explores the sexual gratification derived from seeing bodies mutilated in car crashes will be shown in Britain. David Cronenberg's *Crash*, inspired by J.G. Ballard's novel, received the green light yesterday from the British Board of Film Censors, which awarded it an "18" certificate, without cuts.

The board went to great lengths to address fears about the effect that the violence and sexual perversion in the film could have on young, impressionable minds. James Ferman, the BBFC director, said that they had consulted a forensic psychologist "on the question of harm, particularly the link between sex and disability", and had a special screening for disabled people.

The BBFC, which has been criticised for awarding certificates to films such as *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Reservoir Dogs*, *Natural Born Kill-*

ers and *Kids*, also sought the advice of a QC with extensive experience in prosecuting and defending obscenity cases: "Our legal adviser took the view that, rather than sympathising or identifying with the attitudes or tastes of the characters in this film, the average viewer would in the end be repelled by them, and would reject the values and sexual proclivities displayed."

The film's distributors, Columbia TriStar, said: "We are thrilled that the BBFC has finally given *Crash* the certificate. The film has opened all over the world without any cuts." An opening date has not yet been set.

CORRECTION

Juliana Selby, wife of Ralph Selby (obituary, yesterday) did not survive him, but died in 1994.

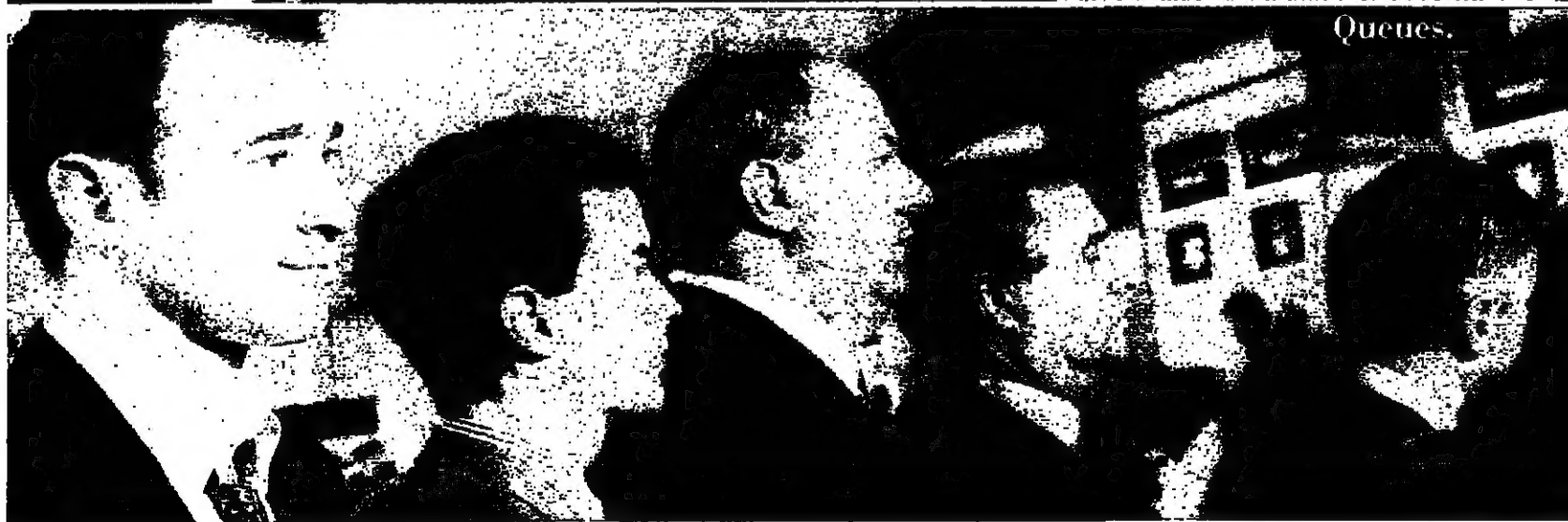
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Follow the ball...



See following pages for details

Elvis soap seller rocks Memphis

**East Ender
overturns US
company's
monopoly on
musical icon**

BY EMMA WILKINS

A FORMER barrow boy yesterday won his High Court battle against America's Elvis Presley industry over the right to sell novelty soaps and trinkets to fans in Britain.

Sid Shaw, 50, who runs an Elvis Presley memorabilia business from a shop in Shore-ditch, east London, said he was delighted that his "David and Goliath" battle was over after 14 years of litigation.

Mr Justice Laddie, sitting in the Chancery Division, ruled that Elvis Presley Enterprises Incorporated (EPEI), of Memphis, Tennessee, was not entitled to register three trademarks to sell toiletry memorabilia in Britain. The judge, who liked Mr Shaw's Elvis Presley soap (E) so much that he took a bar home during the two-day hearing, ruled that EPEI did not own "in any meaningful sense the words Elvis or Elvis Presley".

After the ruling, Mr Shaw said: "Elvis is up there somewhere smiling today. This shows that the little guys can take on the big guys and still win. The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

"Mr Justice Laddie is clearly an Elvis Presley fan. He should be made honorary president of the fan club."

Mr Shaw, who worked in Petticoat Lane market as a boy before reading economics at Essex University, founded his company, Elvisly Yours, in



Two for the show: Sid Shaw, left, and Leyton Sommers outside the High Court yesterday. Mr Shaw said the judge was clearly an Elvis fan

1978 and faced his first legal action from EPEI in 1983 over the rights to sell memorabilia in America. "I have had nothing but grief from these people for 14 years but now I've got British justice," he said. "They think they are omnipotent because they have all the money, but if you have guts and determination and believe in your fight, then you can win."

EPEI, which is the legal successor to Elvis Presley under American law, was yesterday considering whether

to appeal. Peter Prescott, for EPEI, had argued that when people bought souvenirs of their heroes they wanted them to come from a "genuine source".

The judge said that Presley would not be entitled to the sole rights to his name even if he were still alive. "He would not be entitled to stop a fan from naming his son, his dog or goldfish, his car or his house 'Elvis' or 'Elvis Presley', simply by reason of the fact that it was the name given to him at birth by his parents.

There is nothing akin to copyright in a name."

The judge added: "Just as Elvis Presley did not own his name so as to be able to prevent all and any uses of it by third parties, so Enterprises can have no greater rights. Similarly, Presley did not own his appearance. For example, during his life he could not prevent a fan from having a tattoo put on his chest which looked like him."

The judgment overturned a Trademark Registry ruling in February last year which

granted EPEI the trademarks Elvis, Elvis Presley, and Elvis Presley as a signature on toiletry goods in Britain.

Mr Shaw was wearing his favourite Elvis Presley watch (£29.95) for the hearing. A picture of Elvis appears on the face of the "magic" watch, then disappears, every 15 seconds. It is one of 400 items, including *Are You, Lonesome Tonight?* knickers, which Mr Shaw supplies to retail outlets throughout the world including Blackpool Pleasure Beach, the Elvis Presley Inn in Jerusa-

lem, and Madame Tussaud's.

Mr Shaw, who has sold goods worth £3 million between 1979 and 1991, now hopes to increase his turnover to £5 million a year. "Maybe I can float Elvisly Yours on the stock market," he said. Before returning to his shop, he stopped to embrace Leyton Sommers, 62, an Elvis Presley impersonator from Manchester who said it was his "tragedy" to look like the singer. "If you look like someone you have to give up your own life," Mr Sommers said.

Asda's wings are clipped in Penguin biscuit battle

BY DANIEL MCGRODY



Pecking order: the Puffin is too similar to the Penguin

ITS wings clipped, the Puffin limped on to the endangered species list yesterday after being defeated by the Penguin in a fight for nesting rights on shop shelves.

Their seven-day spat in the High Court had caused much amusement. Mr Justice Walker conceded yesterday, but he emphasised that a multi-million-pound business was at stake in the battle between rival chocolate biscuits. He

ruled that the supermarket chain Asda was guilty of passing off its cheaper own-brand Puffin biscuit as having something to do with United Biscuits' 60-year-old best-selling Penguin brand.

Puffins may yet take wing again as Asda intends to appeal. The judge ruled it could continue to use the brand name but would have to change its packaging.

The judge cleared Asda of infringing United Biscuits' registered trademarks — the

word Penguin and pictures of the bird — giving Puffin-lovers a partial victory. He agreed to give Asda a 35-day stay of execution pending an appeal, after hearing that the supermarket has five weeks' stock of biscuits, worth £350,000, to sell.

Thumbing through the 36-page written judgment punctuated with cartoon penguins and puffins, an Asda spokesman made it clear that even if the appeal is lost the Puffin will not vanish but will take on new plumage.

The judge admitted that he had to consult ornithological handbooks in making clear his distinction between the birds, referring to the penguin as ungainly and fat and doubting "whether the average member of the public knows much more about the puffin than it is a seabird with a multicoloured beak".

He agreed that "the cartoon puffin could be mistaken for a cartoon penguin", but added: "Had the Asda product been

called, for example, 'Bison' (to take another name from the original list of possibilities), with a cartoon picture of a brown woolly bison on the packaging, then these proceedings could not possibly succeed."

There was lengthy discussion over the wording of Penguin's famous stuttering slogan — "P... P... P... Pick up a Penguin" — as Iain Purvis, for Asda, insisted that the supermarket had never intended to imitate the style in its promotions.

The judge granted an injunction against continued passing-off by Asda after concluding that the Puffin's "packaging and get-up was deceptively similar to those of Penguin", although he did not believe this was intentional.

Outside the High Court, barristers had to step aside as two lifesize costumed figures of the rival birds shook hands for television cameras before both sides flew off to prepare to do battle again.

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A BETTER APPROACH TO BUSINESS

Leaders to face the nation in series of screen tests

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE leaders of the three main political parties may not yet have agreed to take part in a televised debate, but they are making sure that no section of the television audience is ignored in a series of appearances on the BBC.

Last night the BBC confirmed that John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown will each be interviewed individually on *Panorama* by David Dimbleby in the run-up to the election. The three leaders will also appear on *Question Time*, which no serving Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition has previously agreed to do.

However, Chris Capron of Capron Productions, which makes *Question Time* for the BBC, said that the format would be changed for the three special editions. Mr Major, Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, who has been on the programme before, will appear individually, rather than on a panel, taking questions from the studio audience alone.

To try to attract first-time voters, the leaders have also

agreed to appear individually on Radio 1.

Peter Jay, the BBC's economics editor, will present a programme called *Debate for Chancellor*, which will bring Kenneth Clarke, Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor and Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, head to head. The three will also appear, in turn, on Channel 4's *Power and the People*, where they will face questioning from 300 members of the public.

Mr Clarke has agreed to do four televised debates with his rivals next month. The Chancellor is quite happy to take on both Mr Brown and Mr Bruce. Mr Brown has been less accommodating, agreeing to only two programmes. His aides say that, as Labour's campaign supremo, he is unlikely to have time to do more.

Mr Clarke has also agreed in principle to a three-way debate on BBC 1's *On the Record* on April 20, and an independent production, *Power and the People*, to be shown on Channel 4 on April 27, where the three Treasury men

will be given a slot each and questioned by the audience. Details are being finalised.

Sports and showbusiness personalities will get their chance to question the leaders in a programme presented by the comedian Dennis Pennis, *The Enormous Election with Dennis Pennis*. The interviews will be intercut with footage of Pennis walking through the Commons linking popular programmes with key issues.

Tony Hall, chief executive of news at the BBC, said that the BBC hoped to help people to make sense of the election. "In a general election, which will rely heavily on communicating via the media, particularly the electronic media, it is crucial that the electorate feels its trust in BBC values of impartiality and accuracy is justified. We pledge to get beyond the soundbite and the theatrics of party election management and reach the real issues that count with our audiences," he said.

BBC Radio 4's *Election Call* phone-in programme will offer up a politician a day to the electorate's questions,

while Radio 5 Live, in its first election, will open several lines 24 hours a day, offering listeners a chance to set the questions they want the politicians to answer.

Channel 4 has also tracked down 36 of the 1,784 people born on the day Margaret Thatcher was elected Tory leader on February 11, 1975, as part of its election coverage. Now aged 22, the group, known as *Thatcher's Children*, have only ever been aware of Conservative rule and are to vote in the general election for the first time.

They will give their views on politics and the state of the nation in a series of brief interviews, replacing programme trailers on Channel 4 in the run-up to the election. On April 24, 30 of Thatcher's Children will come together for a studio debate on the youth vote.

David Lloyd, chief commissioning editor of news and current affairs at Channel 4, said that the station hoped to eliminate the enmity that had crept into the weeks of pre-campaign posturing by politicians. "We have worked hard to provide a range of programmes that allow one to follow the campaign seriously, but at the same time to be properly inquisitive and sceptical about what the politicians are telling us," he said.



Kenneth Clarke will be going *On the Record* to debate with his Labour and Liberal Democrat rivals

The satirist Rory Bremner will be offering his view in

programmes scheduled for the Saturday before and the Saturday after the election. Sir David Frost will present *1964 And All That*, in which he compares the present contest with the 1964 general election. Politicians and celebrities will take part in a quiz show, *Spot the Difference*, in which

they will be asked to explain the difference between the parties' policies.

Each weekday Channel 4 will broadcast a new *E-thought*: a short, provocative idea, expressed through words and graphics and lasting less than a minute. They are designed to provide the infor-

mation and details that many politicians are unable or unwilling to reveal, such as the fact that the pharmaceuticals bill for the NHS has doubled in the past four years.

The political chat show *Midnight Special* will return for 90 minutes from Mondays to Thursdays.

Wily political bird survives Paxo roasting

THE torrent of election television began as soon as John Major left for the Palace to ask for a dissolution on Monday morning. And little of it amounted to much more than pointless moving pictures.

The most bizarre — and expensive — images were those from the ITN helicopter as it tracked the roof of the Prime Minister's *Dunfermline* crawling through the traffic up the Mall. The most vacuous were yesterday's BBC *Breakfast News* interviews with each party leader which revealed nothing new at all.

But some journalism penetrated the bonhomie late on Monday night when Jeremy Paxman caught up with Tony Blair in the bland surroundings of a Gloucester hotel room. There was no breakthrough here, no blood on the fitted carpet, but Paxo at least asked the sort of questions that have been nagging away at the back of many minds, not least Labour supporters. Paxman wanted to know what difference there was now between Labour and the Tories. And was there anything, anything at all, which Tony Blair was willing to promise?

Political parties tend to renege on the previous election and Blair is plainly anxious to show that he is not Neil Kinnock. Labour supporters have no need this time to hold their breath as they did when Kinnock went on TV, praying their leader would stumble to the end without inflicting too much damage on the party. But whereas Kinnock would at least attempt to hit a question for six now and then, even if he was caught out, Blair bats each ball to the earth with a thud.

Paxman was determined to ask some troublesome questions. For instance, is Tony Blair still a socialist? We'd need to start defining terms, Jeremy. Why are nine out of ten of the lowest scoring schools in the GCSE and primary league tables administered by Labour authorities? Some of these areas are the poorest in the land, Jeremy.

On the NHS, if there are no specific promises, how will we judge whether Labour has succeeded? At the moment there are people sleeping in hospital corridors, Jeremy. Will you promise then that at the end of your first term there

will not be people sleeping in corridors? It is not a promise I feel I can make, Jeremy. Blair was not flustered, but you could tell by his face that he is rarely spoken to like this.

After Paxman had established that Cedric Brown and other fat cats would not be paying more income tax after five years of Labour, the interviewer tried a trick question. Your promise about no increases in income tax, does this apply to the whole of the UK? Blair, looking perplexed, said yes. What could Jeremy be getting at? Then what about Scotland: surely you will be campaigning for tax-raising powers? Does that not imply more tax? No, said Blair, just because the assembly will be able to raise tax



TV WATCH
NICHOLAS
WAPSHOTT

does not mean that it will actually do so. Paxman gave him the sort of look he reserves for waiters in Italian restaurants who say there is no more red wine in the cellar. Paxman dealt another couple of blows. You are the sort of politician who is brave enough to admit to having changed your mind about things, aren't you? Blair looked pleased. But surely what you need in Downing Street is someone like Mrs Thatcher who doesn't change their mind. Blair blinked in amazement.

And he blinked even more when Paxman wondered whether *The Sun* with its bare-breasted women was the right forum for Blair to use for outlining his views on Europe. I really think there are more important things to concern ourselves with, said Blair. And, to his evident relief, they ran out of time.

Lib Dems rebuked for Union Jack proposal

BY POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Liberal Democrats disowned a suggestion by two of their MPs yesterday that the Union Jack and the national anthem could be replaced if Scotland and Wales had their own parliaments.

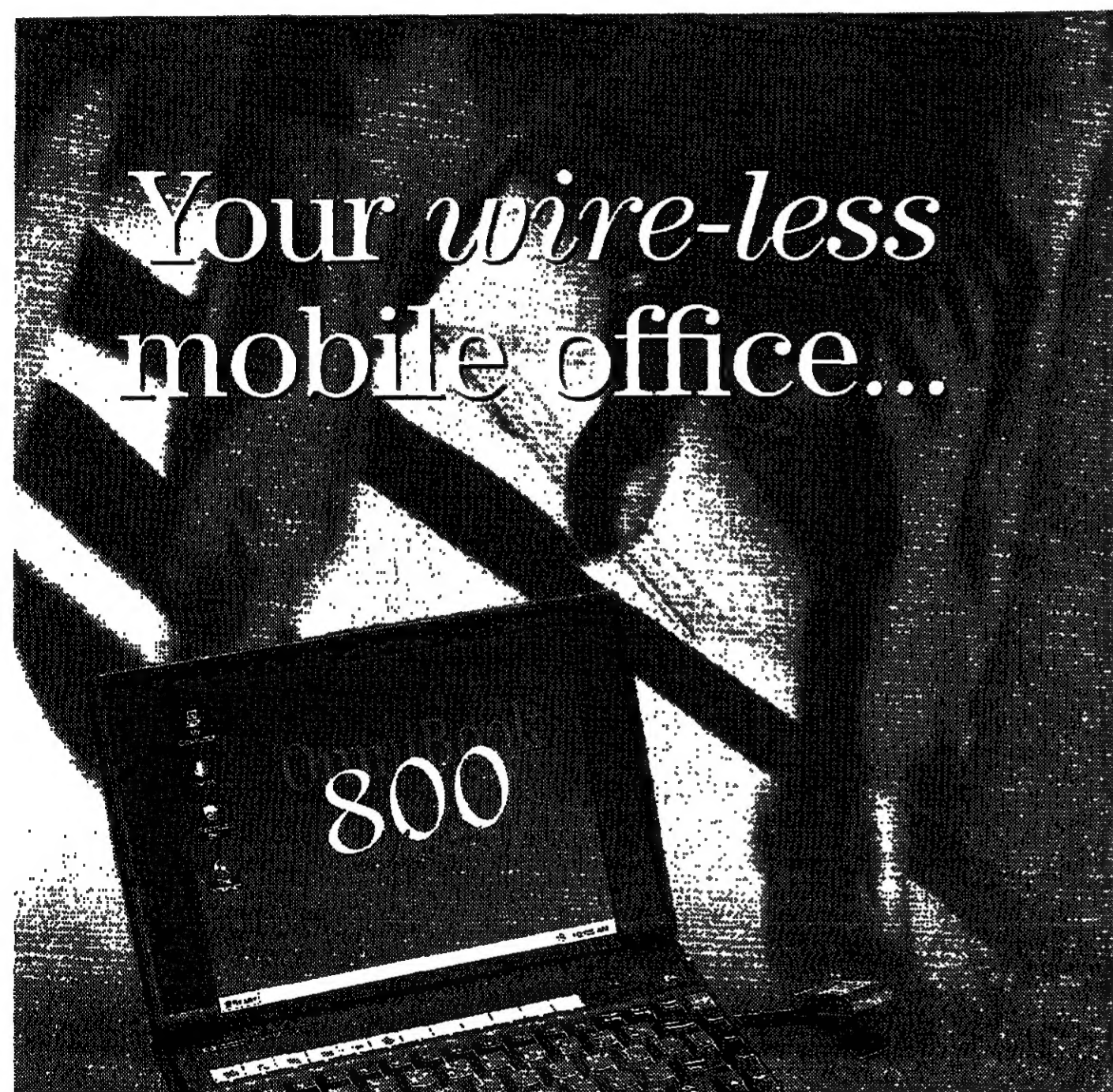
The idea was contained in a pamphlet by Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman, and Ray Michie, MP for Argyll and Bute, who said the "rebirth" of a federal United Kingdom could be reinforced by the adoption of a new flag and a new anthem.

They said: "For many people, the Union Flag has been devalued in modern times by its association with the Tory party — and the

National Front. The national anthem has been similarly hijacked by the English rugby team."

A Liberal Democrat spokeswoman described the proposal as "a personal contribution" and stressed that it was not party policy. Privately, the party leadership was understood to be furious. A source said the two MPs would be told to "stick to policy".

The Tories said the Liberal Democrats would "shred Britain into a series of regions". Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, said: "No one who holds our country dear can now trust either the Liberal Democrats or their Labour partners."



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Blair should be wary of basking in The Sun

Tony Blair is becoming too fashionable. He is in danger of appearing as all things to all people. His campaign advisers are so keen to attract support and to neutralise opposition that they risk misleading voters. For them, winning the election is everything and the problems of governing can be left until later. But the price may be later disenchantment and charges of betrayal.

The smug on Peter Mandelson's face when he praised the wisdom of *The Sun* in backing Mr Blair said it all. There are obvious campaigning reasons why Mr Mandelson would prefer *The Sun's* support, not because the paper's editorial line will shift many votes, but to avoid the mauling which Labour received on its news pages when Neil Kinnock was leader. And *The Sun's* decision matches the big swing against the Tories among its readers, as shown by the polls.

But Mr Mandelson's strongest personal belief — apart from his dedication to Labour (in its Blairite version) — is a vision of Britain's role in Europe totally opposed by *The Sun*. Mr Mandelson is, after all, a vice-chairman of the European Movement, while *The Sun* is a standard bearer of sceptic populism. But the seminal event preceding *The Sun's* declaration of support was an article by Mr Blair on Europe.

Mr Blair claimed there was nothing in the article which contradicted his previous line. But the tone was markedly different from what he would have said to either a business or a European audience. His opening paragraph — "We will have no truck with a European superstate. We will fight for Britain's interests and to keep our independence every inch of the way" — could have been written by Norman Tebbit. His pledge that he was a British patriot and would "not sell my country short" was clearly designed to appeal to a sceptic audience. He advisers cannot have been surprised, nor had any reason to complain, when the front-page story in *The Sun* on Monday said

"Blair takes hard new line on EU" and its leader said that Mr Blair's vision "borders on the Eurosceptic".

But nobody should delude themselves that Mr Blair is a sceptic. He is not. His public caution now is largely to prevent the Tories portraying Labour as weak on Europe. Nonetheless, he believes the public will support a positive British approach towards Europe.

Admittedly, a Blair government would probably not enter a single currency in the first wave if it goes ahead in January 1999. But Labour's attitude would be more supportive than any likely Tory government. And if a single currency succeeds, Labour would then back entry.

One of Mr Blair's main

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

aims in office would be to put Britain's relations with Europe on a more harmonious footing. And given Labour's likely caution on a single currency, he would want to give an early signal of a change of direction, not just by signing the social chapter, but also at the Amsterdam summit of the inter-governmental conference. Labour would keep the veto on defence, tax and immigration policy, but it would support some limited extension of qualified majority voting on environmental, industrial and regional issues.

In its qualified leader yesterday, *The Sun* expressed "great reservations" about both Labour and Tory policy on Europe. Indeed, the approach that I expect a Blair government to take on Europe is likely quickly to be denounced by the sceptics, including *The Sun*. I can also see disappointment over public spending and taxes for all Gordon Brown's careful phrases now. Mr Blair should be wary of courting support from those with whom he really disagrees. He could do with a few enemies, as well as probably fair-weather friends.

PETER RIDDELL

Losing job is voters' biggest fear

By IAN MURRAY

UNEMPLOYMENT is by far the biggest fear of voters, according to a MORI poll published yesterday.

The survey, which could serve as a handy guide for politicians of the issues which

they need to confront, shows that nearly half the population (48 per cent) is anxious about being out of work, compared with under a third who worry about law and order (32 per cent), education (30 per cent) and health services (29 per cent). The economy and

Europe trail in fifth equal on just 14 per cent. Concern for the constitution, a source of bitter party division, did not feature as an issue. Drug abuse worries 8 per cent but race relations only 3 per cent in the *What's Worring Britain* survey.

Prescott tours marginal seats urging waverers to exercise their right to vote

Labour introduces its 'Mr Motivator'

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN PRESCOTT appeared yesterday in his all-action role for the general election campaign — as Labour's "Mr Motivator". Like GMTV's renowned fitness instructor, the deputy Labour leader had been dispatched on a road-show tour of Britain: his task, however, was to galvanise the public to vote Labour.

Mr Prescott, on a windswept Cornish beach, was appearing live, via satellite, at the party's London headquarters. As Tony Blair began to speak, presenting the press conference that launched Labour's election campaign, the lights dimmed and a beaming Mr Prescott materialised on a large screen.

"Before we talk about our plans to get people off welfare and into work, can I introduce you to our very own Mr Motivator, John Prescott, who is in Falmouth with some voters who are switching to Labour," the Labour leader said.

"Hallo, John," Mr Blair said. "Hallo, Tony," Mr Prescott said.

The weather is wonderful, the sun is bright, said Mr Prescott, who fortunately was not wearing Mr Motivator's multicoloured lycra training kit. "I wish I could stay here for the whole campaign but I know you won't let me, Tony."

Mr Blair nodded in agreement. Surrounded by Labour supporters, Mr Prescott was presented with a giant Cornish pasty by a local baker, Paul Barron-Hodge. "I will bring it back home," Mr Prescott de-

clared. "It will keep the whole Shadow Cabinet going for 40 days." Back at headquarters, Mr Blair and his frontbench team, accustomed to the delicate cuisine of north London's more fashionable restaurants, laughed nervously.

Turning to his entourage, Mr Prescott introduced Stan Gore, a local retired civil servant and former Conservative voter who is planning to support Labour on May 1.

Mr Gore, a neighbour of Sebastian Coe, the Olympic Gold winner and sitting MP for the three-way marginal of Falmouth and Camborne, said he was concerned about his young family's future. "It will be best served under a Labour administration," he said.

Mr Prescott said that Mr Gore's story was also that of thousands of other "switchers" across the country.

"So Tony, I am in Plymouth tomorrow. I will give you a ring at the same time. Cheers."

With that, and a wave from everyone in Falmouth, Mr Prescott disappeared from the screen.

The deputy Labour leader has embarked on a 10,000-mile trip around Britain, billed as the biggest ever election tour by one politician. He will be visiting more than 65 marginal seats during the six-week campaign. In the first 48 hours, he intends to cover eight seats and 750 miles in the South West and South Wales.

"We won't stop until we've



John Prescott and Candy Atherton, Labour candidate in Falmouth, slicing into a pasty baked by Paul Barron-Hodge

taken Labour's message to every corner of Britain," Mr Prescott said. "My job is to motivate people and get the vote out to make sure we can beat the Tories."

Mr Prescott's tour will end in the northern-most marginal, Inverness, in late April. At the Beacon School in Fal-

mouth yesterday, Mr Prescott was asked by pupils what it was like being an MP.

"It is better than working," he joked, before adding: "It is an important and privileged job. You represent people, and I have always wanted to do that."

Later, on a visit to a day-care

centre in Plymouth, Mr Prescott joined children in singing a nursery rhyme with words slightly adapted for the occasion.

"Ring a ring of red roses," sang Mr Prescott as he moved in a circle with three little girls, a boy and a day care assistant. "Atishoo, atishoo,

John Major all fall down." As he sank to the grass, he sighed: "You can tell it is the election. We play this in the Commons all the time."

Simon Jenkins, page 18
Letters, page 19
Brian MacArthur, page 23
Housing policies, page 41

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Handthrow — An unusual short break destination that's only a stone's throw away

For years a terrifying giant traumatised a city that lay on the banks of a great river. One day a courageous warrior called Silvius Brabo fought the evil giant known as Antigoon, slew him, cut off his hand and threw it into the mighty river. From then on the city was known as Handthrow.

Welcomed with open arms

Freed from the hideous Antigoon, people and riches flooded into the city making it one of the grandest, wealthiest, most colourful and cosmopolitan cities around. Over the centuries nothing's changed. Today the streets are still thronged with lively cafés and bars (over 2500), restaurants (over 400) and theatres (25). Praise be for such a glorious city dedicated to culture, prosperity and a faith in the future. Churches (87). Museums and galleries abound befitting a city with such a strong heritage.

Rubens House and studio remain intact and his works are commonplace. Sculptures by Rodin, Moore, Hepworth and Zadkin rub shoulder to shoulder in Middelheim Park. Tempting shops, stores and boutiques can be found everywhere. And at night the city rocks to the sound of music, laughter and gaiety. Without doubt, it's the most welcoming, interesting, fun, avant-garde place in the whole country with "more attitude

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A city by another name

An impressive statue to Brabo stands proudly in front of Antwerp's Renaissance style Town Hall. Antwerp? It's Flemish for Handthrow. Come for a short break and we're sure you'll want to throw in the towel and stay.

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Call for watchdog to replace part-time governors

BBC's amateur bosses out of date, say MPs

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MPs demanded the abolition of the BBC's Board of Governors yesterday, labelling them as part-time, well-intentioned amateurs drawn from the great and the good, and accountable to no one.

The Heritage Select Committee called unanimously for the governors' regulatory duties to be transferred to an independent watchdog, with the power to fine the BBC if its programmes fail to meet standards of taste, decency, quality, diversity and social responsibility.

The governors' custodial function of representing the interests of licence-payers would be transferred to a board of directors, headed by an executive chairman and including qualified non-executive directors from different backgrounds.

The Heritage Committee, chaired by the Labour MP Gerald Kaufman, said that the BBC could not expect to "sur-



Kaufman: Auntie needs power dressing, he said

vive, prosper and expand" if its fate was in the hands of "a group of part-time people nominated for various attributes not connected with broadcasting".

In a report titled *BBC and the Future of Broadcasting* it said: "While a board of governors consisting of nominated amateurs was, in an earlier phase of its existence, an appropriate way for the BBC to be supervised, in the new,

tough, commercial environment it no longer is. It is idle to suppose that the present board, however talented they may be as individuals — or any other group of individuals appointed in the same way and from the same pool of the great and the good — can hope to compete adequately."

The 12 board members are appointed by the Queen in Council on the advice of the Government, to protect the public interest. Their terms of office usually last five years. They include Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, former head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the Rev Norman Drummond, former headmaster of the leading Edinburgh public school Loretto, Bill Jordan, general secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and Lord Gordon Lennox, a former Ambassador to Spain.

Mr Kaufman said: "It's about time that Auntie started power-dressing." The committee also recommended that the BBC should be allowed to

borrow money like any commercial organisation, to help it to survive media revolution.

The BBC has recently strengthened the regulatory powers of the governors, enabling them to act as a final court of appeal for viewers bringing complaints.

A BBC spokesman said that their role had been "consolidated and closely refined", adding that the BBC upheld more complaints about its programmes than the Independent Television Commission did on commercial broadcasts.

He added: "The BBC's prime role is as a public service broadcaster. It is not a plc and the governors' custodial role on behalf of the licence payers reflects this."

Mr Kaufman said that the BBC should be subjected to the same rigorous regulation as Channel 4, which can be fined by the ITC for transgressions of taste, decency and impartiality.

The committee advised against privatising Channel 4.



Damon Hill with his wife, Georgie, after receiving his OBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace yesterday

DAMON HILL returned to Buckingham Palace yesterday to receive the insignia of the OBE almost 30 years after he watched his father, Graham, being invested with the same honour.

The reigning Formula 1 world champion, who was 7 when his father was

Hill's lap of honour

honoured in 1968 after winning the world championship for the second time, said: "The room seems smaller than I remember it. I'm very proud to be honoured by the Queen and by the country." He

days ago his Yamaha Arrows car failed to start in the Australian Grand Prix at Melbourne. "We're going to Brazil next week for the next grand prix and looking forward to doing better," he said. Sir Alec Bedser, 75, the former England cricketer, was knighted yesterday.

Psychosis that can be exposed by stress



DIEGO COGOLATO is starting a six-year jail sentence after repeatedly stabbing his lover, the fashion designer Ossie Clark, to death. Cogolato also battered Mr Clark around the head with a stone, a terracotta flower vase, and a stove. The attack on Mr Clark occurred during a period when Cogolato was said to have been suffering from a transient psychotic episode.

Cogolato, 29, seemed to have led a purposeless life since completing his military service in Italy. He regularly took illicit drugs and excessive amounts of alcohol. The attack on Mr Clark was, according to Cogolato, ordered by God as he, Cogolato, was the Messiah sent to rid the world of Satan — his former lover.

Cogolato was originally described as suffering from schizophrenia. The history of delusions, the hearing of God's voice and the patient's acquiescence in the violent solution that he perceived to be God's will, are depressingly familiar to most doctors. Later this initial diagnosis was modified and he was said to be suffering from an acute psychotic episode, sometimes re-

ferred to as a brief reactive psychosis. The features of transient psychotic episodes are that the symptoms should be of sudden origin, last for at least a few hours, and that the patient's personality should return to its pre-episode state within a month. During the Second World War, soldiers who displayed these symptoms were said to suffer from "three-day schizophrenia".

Patients who suffer a brief reactive psychosis often have pre-existing mental disease, or a personality disorder, which is exacerbated by any of the stresses that induce emotional turmoil. Unhappiness after the end of an affair or a divorce is a common precipitating cause of a reactive psychosis but other patients react equally badly to excessive workload or illness.

With treatment the majority of patients will overcome any psychotic symptoms should they recur, and there is increasing evidence that early anti-psychotic treatment can prevent later trouble.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

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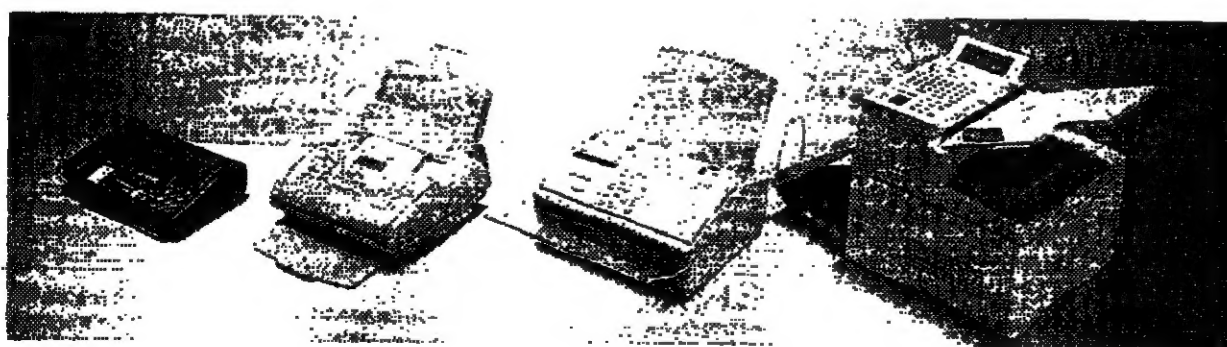
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Growing fear of illegal immigrants and criminals replaces humanitarian response to refugees

Italian alarm as Albanian influx leads to clashes

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE flood of Albanians fleeing across the Adriatic to southern Italy approached 10,000 yesterday, with reports of growing tension and violence between residents and immigrants.

The humanitarian response to the exodus at the weekend has given way to alarm, with officials saying they fear Italy is facing an influx of illegal immigrants and criminals more than a refugee crisis.

The Italian authorities appear to have been caught napping, despite weeks of warnings in the Italian press of a repetition of the influx of 1991, when more than 40,000 fled to Italy after Communism collapsed in Albania.

Officials said it was "practically impossible" to establish the new refugees' identities, carry out full health checks and weed out criminal elements. "I fear the immigrants include Albanian mafiosi who have escaped from jail, and will link up with the Italian Mafia and give them arms," said Pier Luigi Vigna, the chief anti-Mafia prosecutor. "Albania has become the only country in the world with no prisoners." The Italian Cabinet

will meet today to review the crisis.

The separatist Northern League, which takes a strong anti-immigrant stand, said it was forming "vigilante patrols" to keep Albanians out of northern towns. Marco Formentini, the Northern League Mayor of Milan, said Italy was "raising the white flag in the face of an invasion of Albanian delinquents". These people are profiting from disorder to enter our country.

Police in Bari, Brindisi, Otranto and other ports who only a few days ago were seen carrying Albanian babies to safety, have now begun arresting the crews of fishing boats carrying refugees on charges

of transporting illegal immigrants and firearms. Ports and resorts further north such as Pescara, Ravenna and Jesolo, near Venice, were "closed" to immigrants.

Caritas, the Catholic aid agency whose volunteers are bearing the brunt of the relief effort, complained that there were not enough police to keep order in the makeshift refugee camps. The head of Caritas, Mgr Luigi Di Liegro, said Italy and Europe had "sinned by omission" in failing to prevent the Albanian economy from falling into the hands of the Mafia.

In Bari there were ugly scenes as local people demonstrated at refugee centres in schools and church halls, in some cases clashing with the immigrants. "These people bring drugs, prostitution and skin diseases with them," one said.

Simone Di Cagno Abrescia, the Mayor of Bari, was angered by a visit to one centre. "We give them a shower, clean clothes and bedding, and all they do is vandalise things and complain about the food," he said.

In a further sign of disarray, Paolo Foresti, the Italian Ambassador in Tirana — who has played a key role in seeking a diplomatic solution — was abruptly replaced by Alfredo



Albanians, desperate to flee anarchy and poverty afflicting their country, attempt to sail an abandoned cargo vessel to Italy yesterday by fashioning sails from rubbish sacks. The refugees, lacking any other means to flee, had hauled the rusting coaster, which has no power, along the dock

Perilous voyage to 'a better life'

In Durres harbour and then pushed off into the current, using lumber and metal sheeting as oars to propel it. The enterprise seemed so risky that about half of the people on

board disembarked at the mouth of the harbour, fearing it might sink. The rest, numbering about a hundred, drifted out into the Adriatic in a powerless boat for five days, three of them without food or water. (Reuters)

abroad. Several smaller craft, also without power, were reported to have drifted out of Durres harbour as well yesterday. On Monday the US Navy rescued 20 Albanians who had been adrift in the Adriatic in a powerless boat for five days, three of them without food or water. (Reuters)

Red Cross backs Tirana appeal for aid

Anthony Loyd reports from Tirana on the desperate state of the civilian population as food stocks fall to critical levels



ALBANIA's new Prime Minister, Bashkim Fino, issued an urgent appeal for humanitarian aid yesterday after food stocks fell to critical levels. The International Committee of the Red Cross backed his appeal and called for funds to finance emergency aid.

The head of the European Union delegation in the capital, Tirana, refused to rule out recommending that foreign troops should be sent to safeguard the delivery of emergency supplies. "We are not looking at military intervention or a big force," Jan de Marchant of D'Ansembourg, a Dutch diplomat, said yesterday. "But we need aid to be brought in for those who need

it, and we cannot provide humanitarian assistance without first stabilising the environment: to do that might require a real European commitment here."

Mr D'Ansembourg spoke after separate meetings with President Berisha, Mr Fino and Albanian officials. His fact-finding delegation arrived in Tirana on Monday night and leaves today to submit a

report to EU foreign ministers. The delegation is divided into three groups, assessing security aspects of any potential aid mission as well as financial and humanitarian requirements.

"We have four military men concentrating on that aspect of affairs," Mr D'Ansembourg said. His delegation was sent after an EU meeting in The

Netherlands last weekend refused Albania's request for a peacekeeping force to help to restore order. However, that refusal did not preclude the deployment of a UN-style "protection" force for the delivery of aid.

Mr Fino repeated his request for outside assistance to restore order. "We need humanitarian aid as soon as possible, mainly food and medicine to prevent further aggravation of the situation," state television quoted him as saying on Monday.

"European police units are necessary to distribute this aid ... and contribute to restoring order and rebuilding our police. Reorganising public

and financial institutions would be another part of [the] assistance."

Although the overall level of violence has calmed over the past three days after police succeeded in holding the centre of Tirana, the state had been left fragmented into well armed fiefdoms of conflicting loyalty.

The North is held largely by paramilitary and police units loyal to Mr Berisha. It is unclear whether the President or the Prime Minister holds the centre of Tirana, so confused is the situation, but most of the suburbs are loyal to the new Government. The South is held by rebel groups hostile to the President.

Iran school attacked

BY JAMES PETTIFER

HEAVILY armed men leading a crowd of adolescents wielding pickaxes and shotguns destroyed much of the Iranian Government's agricultural school on the outskirts of Tehran last night.

This impressive modern complex, near the airport, was the showpiece of the Tehran Government's quiet economic and diplomatic offensive in Albania. The cost of the damage is estimated by Albanian employees at about \$1.5 million (£950,000). The school was opened by President Berisha and a leading Iranian cleric three years ago.

Albania, where 60 per cent of the population is Muslim,

was a natural target for Iranian aid and missionary work after years of religious persecution under communism. Strong American opposition has, however, prevented the opening of high-level diplomatic relations.

In response the Iranians have concentrated on economic links, with frequent trade exhibitions in Albania, subsidised exports of Iranian goods, and this large and well-run programme concentrating on educating farmers, particularly in the rearing of cattle.

The Tehran approach in Albania has avoided the ostentatious mosque-building programmes of Kuwait and Abu Dhabi.

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Republican fundraising obsession slows wheels of government to a crawl



Clinton: foreign policy an enticing refuge

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON intended to spend yesterday with his physiotherapist, dubbed "the torture team", as well as preparing for today's trip to Helsinki to meet President Yeltsin of Russia.

Instead, from his wheelchair in the White House, he grappled with a different, unexpected, ordeal: the urgent search for a new head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Anthony Lake's decision to withdraw his nomination, making him the first casualty of this round of Senate confirmation hearings, shows how the campaign finance

ANALYSIS

row has brought government to a standstill. The Administration is weeks behind schedule in making key appointments as officials scour their offices for memorandums demanded by congressional committees. The Republican-controlled Congress, obsessed with the document trail, has passed no significant legislation in three months.

Little wonder that to Mr Clinton foreign policy seems an enticing refuge, although the Helsinki summit reflects one of the causes of the Washington deadlock: the United States lacks a real threat

abroad or at home. Suggestions that China tried to influence November's elections have partly satisfied the craving for a new enemy. But members of Congress have found it easiest to fill the policy vacuum with attacks on each other, bringing an emphatic end to the bipartisan honeymoon and jeopardising Mr Clinton's hopes of a worthwhile second term.

As Mr Lake put it on Monday night: "Washington has gone haywire." A career diplomat with a thin-lipped smile, 1950s felt hat, horn-rimmed glasses and beige mackintosh, Mr Lake's bitterness at the abrupt end to his ascent is understandable.

Mr Lake's record at the National Security Council was not faultless, but he is right to claim that seeking high office has become perilous. The Senate investigates every corner of a nominee's life, a scrutiny many find unacceptable even if there is no illegally hired nanny in the background to disqualify them.

Mr Lake's move also shows how the fundraising row is clogging the machinery of government. His confirmation hearings were prolonged largely because the committee used the questions to investigate White House campaign tactics rather than his suitability for the job.

Meanwhile, the State Department has delayed nominating am-

bassadors and assistant secretaries while it checks whether any have connections, particularly with Asia, that could seem suspicious.

The White House has postponed a study of gambling, for fear of charges that Mr Clinton was influenced by gambling donations. Above all, policy towards China has been complicated; the charges, denied by Peking, will dominate Vice-President Al Gore's forthcoming trip to China.

The investigations may turn up extensive evidence of illegality, but so far the clamour has far outpaced the findings. The dispute is a reminder of how two obstacles increasingly threaten to cripple

American political life: the difficulty of winning office, and of getting anything done once in the job. Those constraints would be less if there were more sense of urgency among congressional Republicans or Democrats about pushing through a legislative agenda. The US is not short of problems to solve.

But the economic prosperity that swept Mr Clinton to a second term, as well as the end of the Cold War, have removed the pressure which would have forced Congress and the White House to reach across their divisions. Many besides Mr Lake will feel bitter if the lesson of the 105th Congress is that America can be governed only in crisis.

Clinton candidate for CIA chief quits over Senate 'circus'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S controversial fundraising antics claimed a member of his inner circle yesterday when Anthony Lake withdrew his nomination as Director of the CIA, maintaining he was the victim of partisan politics.

Mr Lake, the President's former National Security Adviser and senior negotiator on Ireland, told Mr Clinton he was no longer prepared to act as a "dancing bear in a political circus" of Senate confirmation hearings.

His departure, which comes three months after being nominated, left the President hobbled both physically and politically on the eve of his flight to the Helsinki summit with President Yeltsin. Mr Clinton had hoped to spend the day resting after an operation to his knee last week, but instead was forced to consider swift replacements for the CIA position.

Mr Lake was the fourth nominee for the CIA job during Mr Clinton's tenure at the White House and the second to have withdrawn from the role, which also includes board chairman of the nation's 12 other intelligence services and controller of the purse strings for a \$30 billion (£19 billion) budget.

The resignation came after a damaging report which alleged that the Democrats had ignored the President's national security aides and even deployed secret information from the CIA to ensure White House access last year for a Lebanese businessman wanted by Interpol.

Nancy Soderberg, then Mr Lake's deputy at the National Security Council, had warned the Democratic National Committee that Roger Tamraz was not to be allowed into the

White House for donor events to Mr Clinton's re-election.

But Don Fowler, chairman of the committee, tried to overturn her recommendation and is believed to have arranged for a secret CIA dossier on Mr Tamraz to be sent to national security aides.

Mr Tamraz attended four events with Mr Clinton, including a June screening of the film *Independence Day*, and



I still believe in public service. But Washington has gone haywire

contributed at least \$177,000 to the Democrats in 1995 and 1996. In Lebanon, he is wanted for questioning regarding \$200 million allegedly missing from the Bank al-Mashrek.

The CIA and congressional investigators are treating the claims as "extremely serious". Senate Republicans had planned to make them an issue at hearings into Mr Lake's confirmation.

It was the second time, including an FBI warning to

the national security team about China's attempts to influence the election, that Mr Lake was said by the White House to have had no knowledge of intelligence matters in his own department.

But he had also drawn criticism for not informing Capitol Hill of a tacit White House decision in 1994 to approve Iran's arming of the Bosnian Muslims. He had also faced lengthy questioning over personal finances and a political past which included a protest resignation from the Nixon Administration over the invasion of Cambodia.

The latest bombshell over Mr Tamraz had given the Senate intelligence committee enough leverage to delay a vote on Mr Lake's nomination until mid-April, bringing further damage to an intelligence agency racked by moles.

In a letter to Mr Clinton, Mr Lake said he was the victim of a "brutal" confirmation process. He had lost his patience, he said, come close to losing his dignity, and was not prepared to face a nomination process with no end.

"I have believed all my life in public service. I still do. But Washington has gone haywire," he said. "I hope that people of all political views beyond our city will demand that Washington give priority to policy over partisanship, to governing over 'gotcha'."

Those being considered for the vacant post last night included George Tenet, the acting CIA Director, Jamie Gorelick, the Deputy Attorney-General, Frank Wisner, the US Ambassador to India, and Sam Nunn, the former senator who is a military and intelligence specialist.

Leading article, page 19



Linda Finch prepares to take off from Oakland on the first leg of her round-the-world flight. The total journey will cover 26,000 nautical miles

Texan millionairess takes off in flight path of pioneering pilot

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A TEXAN millionairess has set off from California in a vintage aircraft in an attempt to recreate and complete Amelia Earhart's ill-fated attempt to fly round the world 60 years ago.

Hundreds of schoolchildren cheered as Linda Finch took off in her painstakingly restored 1935 Lockheed Electra 10E on Monday from the same airfield in Oakland from which Earhart left on St Patrick's Day in 1937. Ms Finch, 46, hopes to complete the round-the-world flight planned by Miss Earhart, who earned international fame when she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic in 1932.

Earhart originally hoped to set a

record for circling the globe by travelling west, but she crashed in Hawaii. She had her plane repaired for a second attempt heading east, but disappeared on July 2, 1937, while flying a leg from Lae, New Guinea, to Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean. In the absence of any wreckage, there is unending speculation about Earhart's disappearance. It has even been suggested she was on a spying mission against the Japanese.

Others have flown Earhart's route, but nobody has ever done it in a twin-engine Electra similar to Earhart's aircraft. Ms Finch, who has made a fortune running nursing homes, bought the plane

in boxes and spent two years rebuilding it, borrowing parts from an Electra on display at an aerospace museum in Oakland.

Unlike Earhart, Ms Finch will benefit from a global-positioning satellite receiver and will use VHF radio to help with landings and take-offs. She will also have an escort plane carrying a film crew to chronicle her endeavour.

Flying at a maximum speed of 200mph, her flight will cover 26,000 nautical miles and take her to 20 countries before she returns to Oakland in July. She plans to drop a wreath on Howland Island, near where Earhart is presumed to have gone down, to commemorate the great aviator.



Earhart disappeared over Pacific in 1937

Missing Renoir retrieved from US

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE Spencer-Churchill family has retrieved Renoir's *Study for the Apple Gatherers* from a leading American collector after accusing a London dealer of selling it to him without permission.

A lawyer representing Jeanne Spencer-Churchill, whose millionaire husband is a cousin of the Duke of Marlborough, picked up the painting at the weekend from the Connecticut home of Richard Thune, a noted collector of 18th and 19th-century French paintings.

The undated oil of two women picking apples in a field, valued at up to \$2 million (£1.26 million), is now being shipped back to London by Sotheby's. Mrs Spencer-Churchill, 42, herself an accomplished artist, inherited the painting from her grandfa-

ther, Paul Maze, who was Sir Winston Churchill's painting tutor.

Mr Maze's father was a close friend of Renoir as well as other famous French artists including Monet, Manet and Braque. He had bought the oil in the 1930s from the artist's son, Jean Renoir, the film director.

Mrs Spencer-Churchill's husband, Robert, the only son of the late Lord Ivor Spencer-Churchill, inherited a fortune as a child from his rich American grandmother, Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan. The couple have two sons - Jack, 13, and Ivor, 11.

The Renoir hung for a time on a wall of the Spencer-Churchill's home in London and, from 1991 until 1994, was put on show at the Leeds City Art Gallery. Mrs Spencer-

Churchill then offered to lend the painting to the Museum of Wales in Cardiff and sought the help of William Joll, a family friend and former director of Agnew's art gallery.

According to a High Court writ, Mr Joll told the family that he had arranged for the painting to be taken to the Lefevre Gallery in Mayfair to be viewed by museum officials. The museum decided not to take up the offer and Mr Joll is said to have moved it to another, unnamed London gallery.

Mrs Spencer-Churchill only learnt that the painting was missing when she called the Museum of Wales to check on it while moving house in January. In court papers, she says she believes that Mr Joll sold the painting to Mr Thune for the bargain price of

\$250,000 without informing her.

Mr Thune agreed to return the painting to the family because of the threat of further legal action in the American courts. But he was said yesterday to be distressed by the case and seeking reimbursement of the purchase price from Mr Joll.

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Zaireans welcome rebel liberators in captured city

THEY are wearing white stripes of cloth around their heads in this jungle city which last weekend became the greatest prize to fall to rebels advancing across Zaire. The people say they will not remove the bandanas until the arrival of the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, who is expected in coming days.

"The headbands symbolise victory and liberation," Paul-Marcel Volakonga, a librarian at the local university, said. "The fighters who freed us from dictatorship are not rebels, they are liberators."

Apart from a few looted shops in the town centre, there is little evidence of the fall of Kisangani to Mr Kabila's Democratic Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. The Zairean Army and its mercenary backers had been expected to resist the rebel assault but instead they fled in panic.

The bulk of the army crossed the Zaire River in boats, residents said. Hundreds of French, Serb, Moroccan and other mercenaries, who had been drafted in to protect the city, either escaped by aircraft westwards or disappeared into the jungle with the Zairean soldiers.

At the military airport an aircraft, its tyres shot out, bears testimony to a gun battle between the retreating mercenaries and soldiers desperate to prevent their allies' flight by air.

"Now all is calm," Mr Volakonga said. "The curfew is over and we can move about the city again. The liberators behave well, they don't beat us as if we were snakes which is what the army did. The mercenaries were cruel, they would just shoot people in cold blood. Their motto was 'No pity'."

Residents said they were waiting for the establishment of a new administration in

Kisangani residents are urging the fighters who freed them from dictatorship to push on for the capital, Kinshasa, reports David Orr

Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city and the farthest point west of the rebels' advance. A decaying city in the depths of the equatorial rainforest, Kisangani has, in this virtually roadless country, a symbolic significance: perched on the banks of the mighty Zaire River, it stands as the gateway to more than 1,000 miles of navigable waterway leading to Kinshasa, the capital.

Kisangani was the redoubt chosen by the Government to launch its counter-offensive



and beat back the rebels. Zairean Army commanders boasted it could not be taken. Its fall, diplomats in the region said, will send shockwaves all the way to Kinshasa, where the population grows daily more fearful of turmoil. There have been rumours in the capital of an imminent coup by the military, which has been humiliated in the five months since the rebel insurgency began.

The collapse of the country is matched by the decline in the health of President Mobutu. News that the cancer-stricken leader has again

been hospitalised in France came within days of the fall of Kisangani. Speculation is growing that the President will die in exile and that his corrupt regime will self-destruct in the coming days or weeks.

"It would be good if Mobutu dies," Evariste Lombe, a Kisangani medical student, said. "But it would be even better if he lives to witness his own downfall."

The rebels now control a fifth of this sprawling Central African nation. Residents of Kisangani hope that the rebel force will press its military advantage and take all of the country rather than enter into peace talks that are being initiated by the international community.

"The rebels are strict but they seem fair," Jerry Selenke, an American missionary whose house was looted by the ill-disciplined army before they fled, said. "There's law and order. It's much easier working with the new guys than with the old regime."

Yesterday, Joseph Kabila, son of the rebel movement's leader and a regional commander, gave the residents in Kisangani 48 hours to return all goods looted from abandoned aid agency stores and depots. More than 400 tonnes of material — food, medicine and electrical equipment — was looted by civilians and the retreating army. If they do not comply, they have been told, they will be severely punished. A large amount of the stolen goods have already been returned.

Defector flies to Philippines

By JAMES FRINGLE

THE most senior official to defect from North Korea, Hwang Jang Yop, arrived yesterday in the Philippines from Beijing, where he had sought asylum five weeks ago, fearing he was about to be purged by political enemies.

He left the South Korean consulate, where he had been sheltering, in a rush involving three vans making off in different directions to thwart any assassination attempt. Earlier in the saga, North Korean agents had surrounded the consulate and were assumed still to have at least some operatives in the area.

The night-time escape thwarted television teams which had maintained a vigil outside the consulate in one of Beijing's diplomatic compounds since shortly after Mr Hwang, an ideologue who invented North Korea's philosophy of *Juche*, or self-reliance, walked out of the North Korean Embassy in the Chinese capital on February 12 and took a taxi to the South Korean consulate.

The Chinese were furious when the South Koreans broke the news in a high-profile manner and Beijing tried to give as little promi-

nence to the incident as possible so as not to embarrass North Korea, an old ally and comrade-in-arms during the Korean War.

Officials in the Philippines said that Mr Hwang flew to Clark airbase, north of Manila, and the South Korean Foreign Ministry said he was "safe, under South Korean control, in a foreign country". China said that the affair had been resolved through negotiations. Envoys believe he will fly on to Seoul after a decent interval, agreed at Beijing's behest so as to allow Pyongyang to save some face.



Orthodox Jews on the windswept Har Homa hillside as surveyors move in

Israeli guns guard start of work on settlement

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

HAMAS, the Islamic Resistance Movement, last night called for a new Palestinian intifada after Israel defied world opinion and dispatched bulldozers in a military-style operation to start work on Har Homa, a big settlement in annexed east Jerusalem.

Israeli forces were put on an emergency footing after the Government of Benjamin Netanyahu was told by security chiefs that Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had given the go-ahead for violent protests among the 2.2 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "We have received very hard intelligence that the Palestinian Authority has prepared the ground for violence," the Prime Minister said. "I demand they reverse these decisions immediately. The Palestinian side must choose, do we want terror or do we want peace?"

As hundreds of troops in full battle gear guarded the earthmoving equipment and police scuffled with Israeli Arabs at the site, declared a "closed military zone", Israeli radio



national police chief, said that police were preparing "for the ground to get hot", with officials concerned that Friday's Muslim prayers could spark an explosion.

Faisal Husseini, Mr Arafat's chief Jerusalem representative, was one of those Palestinians whose rain-soaked tent protest at the contested pine-covered hillside was wrongfooted as work began a safe distance away. He said at the camp site opposite Har Homa — which the Arabs call Jabal Abu Ghneim — that the groundbreaking, ordered by Mr Netanyahu after a 45-minute session with his military chiefs, left the Palestinians only one option — "to go down to the streets". The Hamas call for a "continuous intifada" was issued from Jordan by Ibrahim Ghoshe, its spokesman.

London: Malcolm Rifkind yesterday sharply condemned the construction, saying it would do nothing but harm to the peace process (Michael Binyon writes). In a personal statement, the Foreign Secretary said the settlement went against the spirit of the Oslo agreement.

Filipinos get £240m British bridges

FROM ABBY TAN IN MANILA

BRITAIN yesterday presented the Philippines with a £240 million project for a network of bridges that promises to alter dramatically the lives of millions of rural Filipinos.

The scheme, involving 218 bridges to be constructed in 70 provinces by the British company Mabe and Johnson, was launched by President Ramos. He was presented with the project by Adrian Thorpe, the British Ambassador, and Mabe and Johnson officials at the presidential palace, where they also wished the Filipino leader a happy 60th birthday.

The bridges, which will be built at the rate of one a day, are designed to withstand natural disasters and to require little maintenance. The Philippines suffers from typhoons, floods and volcanic eruptions.

Mr Ramos said the bridges will spur agricultural production, commercial and tourism activities and directly benefit nearly ten million Filipinos.

The British Government is paying for the project through a grant and soft loan package. Mr Ramos said that the aid had "freed much-needed government resources for other pressing programmes", like upgrading teachers' skills, small-scale enterprises and rural health.

The bridges were christened FVR after the President's initials because, as Mr Thorpe explained, "they are fast to erect, versatile and value-for-money, robust and reliable".

British 'advisers' detained in Papua

BY NOEL PASCOE IN PORT MORESBY AND MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH former special forces soldiers were among 40 mercenaries still being held in Papua New Guinea yesterday, despite an order by Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister, to release them.

The former British and South African soldiers were caught up in a stand-off between Sir Julius, who hired the foreign military "advisers" to train the country's army to put down a nine-year-old secessionist guerrilla war, and Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, the Defence Force commander, who has been sacked for trying to expel the mercenaries.

The Foreign Office said it had reports that two or three Britons were among those detained. However, the Foreign Office has criticised the Papua New Guinea Government for using mercenaries to train its military. A Foreign Office source said the secessionist dispute with the Bougainville Revolutionary Army rebels could not be resolved through military action.

The mercenaries are being held at a remote camp near the northern coastal town of Wewak. The foreign "advisers" had been hired after an agreement signed on January 31 between Papua New Guinea and Sandline International, a London-based security consultancy company. Sandline, whose chief executive is Lieutenant-Colonel Tim Spicer, formerly of the Scots Guards, said yesterday that General Singirok had been involved in the deal.

The general's address to the nation, which condemned the use of foreign military advisers and called for the resignation of Sir Julius, contradicted his earlier position. Sandline said. In a statement, the company said: "We are astounded that he would unilaterally seek to destabilise the democratically elected Government with his wildly inaccurate, misleading and untrue claims."

Sandline said General Singirok had consistently supported the contractual terms of the deal. The firm added that it had contacted Sir Julius and had confirmed that its advisory team would remain in the country "as long as we are required".

Most of the mercenaries have been provided by Executive Outcomes, a firm based in Pretoria, South Africa, subcontracted by Sandline. Sir Julius said yesterday that he was in "absolute control" of the situation and accused Brigadier-General Singirok of "gross insubordination bordering on treason". He could face arrest, he said.

WORLD SUMMARY

German troops in race row

Bonn: Ten German soldiers, earmarked for Bosnia service, were arrested yesterday after attacking an Italian and two Turks with baseball bats and knives (Roger Boyes writes). They were drunk, but serious enough to pull on masks and shout racist slogans.

The assault embarrassed an army command basking in media praise. Having helped to move 103 people out of Albania, its soldiers had been dubbed "German heroes" for the first time in years.

Separatist's news break

Venice: Police started an investigation into how state television's main news broadcast was interrupted by a man urging people in northeast Italy to overthrow the Government. The separatist managed to block out the sound on RAI Uno's evening news bulletin in the Veneto region twice in about 20 minutes and broadcast his own recorded message. (Reuter)

Poverty wage for UN maid

Geneva: The most senior UN human rights official paid his Peruvian maid a poverty level wage for two-and-a-half years, (Peter Capella writes). José Ayala Lasso, who has resigned as High Commissioner for Human Rights to become Ecuador's Foreign Minister, paid the maid \$800 (£506) a month for working 11½ hours a day on a six-day week.

Cuban drugs general freed

Miami: Cuba has released from prison a former general jailed for 30 years in 1989 for his part in a drug trafficking scandal that shocked Cuba's Communist Party (David Adams writes). Relatives said Brigadier General Patricio de la Guardia, 58, was told he was free soon after hearing of the death of his father, 97.

Amnesty drive on refugees

London: There are 15 million refugees in the world and another 20 million displaced persons forced from their homes but within their national borders. Amnesty International said as it launched a global campaign, condemning the "callous disregard" of governments. (AFP)

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When size is everything



JANE SHILLING
GETS DRESSED

I am not, in general, much given to conspiracy theories, but I have lately begun to wonder about men and their clothes. I mean, if you say to a girl "What size are you", she will instantly reply "ten", or "twelve" or whatever. If the conversation has taken a really technical turn, someone might admit to having a size twelve top half and a size fourteen bottom, or to being a size eight at Jaeger and a size twelve at Miss Selfridge, where the margins are tighter and the clientele skinnier, but that is as complicated as it gets.

All this makes shopping a matter of beautiful simplicity. You wander into a shop, pick up This Season's Prettiest Ruffle-front Frock in cerise georgette overprinted with lime trifids, take it into the fitting-room and — hey presto! — it fits. Or possibly not. In which case you try again with the next size up until it does. Really, a child could do it.

In fact with children it is even easier, since all you have to do is remember how old Tarquin is, then purchase the trousers on the hanger that says Age Five. And if they turn out to be six inches too large in every direction, you just roll up the legs until his feet appear and, ignoring his protests, reef in the extra yardage around the waist with one of those useful elastic belts.

Chaps, on the other hand, before they can complete the purchase of a suit, need to have mastered a kind of Venn diagram containing such outlandish measurements as Inside Leg, and Shoulder to Waist Ratio, and Circumference of Thumb. And of course the whole business of measuring all these body parts is so stressful (not to mention, as the years advance, humiliating) that they naturally can't face doing it very often.

So what happens (and this is where the conspiracy theory comes in) is that, gazing fondly at one's Significant Other, one suddenly notices that the shirt he is wearing

(which you never really cared for even when it was new, back in 1986) is so badly frayed that the collar appears to have a half-inch fringe. Furthermore, his corduroys have on each thigh a huge bald patch, which makes them look as though they are suffering from mange.

"I can't stand it any more," you say. "You have GOT to get some new clothes." Oh darling, he says shifty, hellish busy all week. I know, why don't you pop out and buy yourself that jumper you've been on about, and pick me up a couple of pairs of strides while you're at it?

Thus it is that you find yourself in the Posh Gents Outfitters, immobilised like a rabbit before a serpent by Darren the Slick Operator, who has every intention of selling you hundreds of quids' worth of clothes, but not before he has given you a really hard time.

"What size is he, then," says Darren. "Big bloke, is he? My sort of build? Or is he more the streamlined type? Like Gary over there. 'Ere, Gazza, look sharp. Come and give the little lady some assistance."

Oh crikey, you say, I suppose he's sort of medium, really. Have you got a shirt in medium, do you think? "Medium," says Darren. "Harharharharhar. That's a good one, that is. Now, you just tell me his neck measurement and we'll see what we can do. Long in the arm, is he? Or normal?"

Oh, really, it is more than flesh and blood can bear. Observing that you thought you were buying a shirt for a man, not an orang-utan, you sweep out, arriving home extremely flustered to a great deal of eye-rolling from your husband, who says that since you have obviously totally alienated the staff of the only place where he could contemplate purchasing an outfit, most unfortunately the whole business will have to wait until next year at least...

COMPETITION THE TIMES

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and help to
raise money for
Comic Relief



To support the Red Nose Day campaign McLaren International, and their close friends the Spice Girls, have linked up with The Times to offer you the chance to win a £36,000 Mercedes SLK. There are runners-up prizes of trips to Edinburgh on Virgin CrossCountry and flights to Paris with Air France. Over five previous Red Nose Days, Comic Relief has raised just over £112m to help projects in Africa and the UK.

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HOW TO ENTER Call our hotline, above, before midnight on Saturday March 22 with the answer to this question:

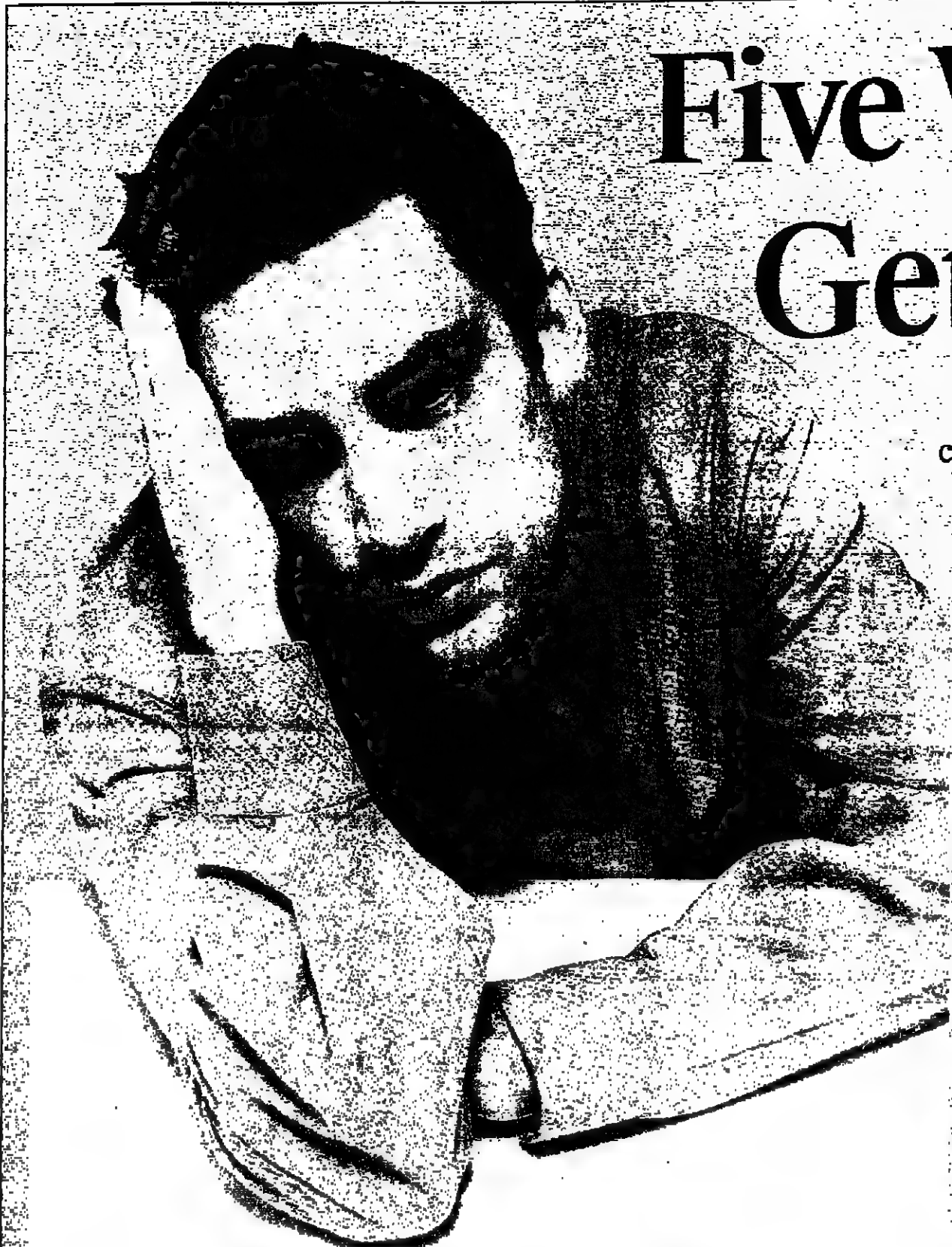
How much money has Comic Relief raised in its five previous Red Nose Days?
a) £100 million b) £112 million c) £150 million

All proceeds from the line will go to Comic Relief. Normal TNL competition rules apply.

CHANGING TIMES

Five Ways to Get Shirty

From clashing prints to identical colours, Grace Bradberry chooses new shirt and tie combinations



Orange patterned shirt, £26, and silk tie, £48, by Paul Smith, 114-115, Fenchurch Street, London, EC2

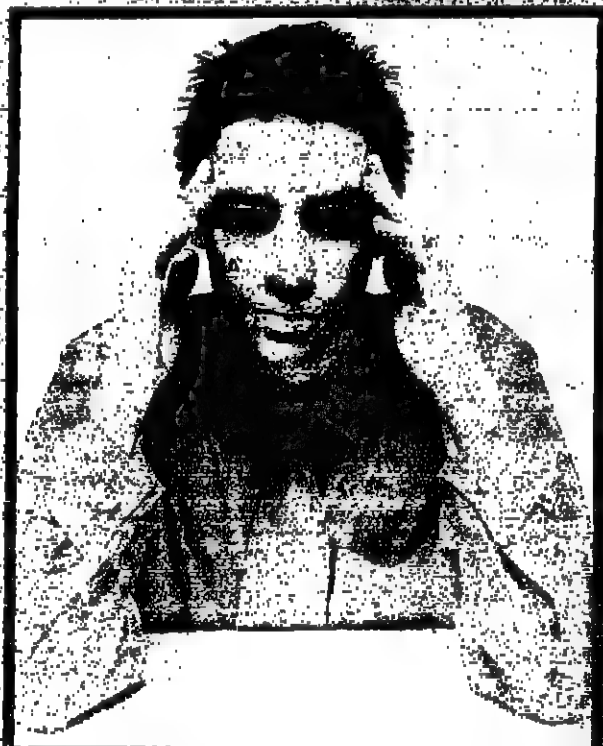
Quilted shirt, £26, and Quince tie, £25, from Henry Machin



Shirt, £26, and tie, £25, by Oswald Boesing, 9 Vigo Street W1



Shirt, £110, and tie, £25, by Richard James, 31 Saville Row, W1



Shirt, £27, and silk tie, £10, from Marks & Spencer

Photographer: KARL GRANT; Stylist: DEBORAH BRETT; Grooming: PASCAL MARIN; Model: FIL HANLEY at So Damn Tuff

Tied-up for the election

Politicians from all parties are choosing the same neckwear

WHEN the suit is dull and dark, and the shirt bland, a man's only means of self-expression is his tie. And for the electorate, it is the only sartorial guide to the personalities that lurk beneath.

How unfortunate then that the leaders of the two main parties, whose policies are already distressingly similar, should also have plumped for such similar neckwear.

Geometric patterns currently have a particular allure for British politicians. Even Dafydd Wigley, President of Plaid Cymru, and Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, could not resist wearing little squares all over their ties — and in doing so, they revealed a surprising cultural unity with their English counterparts.

The chances are that all these men consider that they are wearing an "interesting" tie. They doubtless rejected a plain one on the ground that it would look dull. But they were not about to go all swirly and psychedelic on the first day of the general election campaign.



John Major and Tony Blair favour geometric patterns



Oh no, leave the LSD trip tie to some other poor fool. Likewise the large lemons and winking pinks that pass for humour in large City banks.

A previous generation, would have opted for stripes. But these now come with too

much social baggage. They smack either of Essex-man aspirations or of old school ties.

John Major, the boy from Brixton, can scarcely wear one to mount the soapbox, and Tony Blair is seeking to play

down his public school background.

Mary Spillane, the image consultant behind Colour Me Beautiful, says that a geometric *foulard*, the name for a repeated pattern, is really the only option: "If you look at what's around, then geometric designs, flowers and stripes are the most prevalent. A politician might as well shoot himself in the foot as wear flowers."

"At the last election, Labour went for great big personality ties — and it was difficult to concentrate on what they were saying."

Closer inspection reveals tiny differences between the two leaders: Mr Blair's squares wobble slightly at the edges, Mr Major's don't.

But who knows, as the election approaches, the politicians may reveal their true colours. Mr Blair might come out in Prada tone-on-tone — red-on-red perhaps, or even blue-on-blue.

GRACE BRADBERRY
Style Editor



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A woman simply can't win in court

Why Tania Clayton had to be a victim to prove her case

Every time a woman wins a sexual harassment case, the air grows thick with gibes of wimp and whinger — and that's just from the female commentators.

I think it would be difficult for anyone, however, even the most hardboiled of vinegar-lipped observers, to put up a convincing argument against Tania Clayton, the fire officer who has just won (in an out-of-court settlement) £200,000 to compensate her for five years of bullying and victimisation at work. Her colleagues were undoubtedly wrong to behave as they did; she was undoubtedly right to try to do something about it.

And yet... and yet... five years? One is not supposed to ask of battered wives why

of a world gone seriously awry in matters of reason and comportment, but it is hard to see, by comparison, what Paula Jones hopes to gain (except for a great deal of money) by suing Bill Clinton for sexual harassment.

This is a very different case: Jones claims Clinton made improper advances in a hotel room in 1991, as a consequence of which she was left feeling "mentally raped". While there are people being physically raped I am afraid I haven't got much time for such self-pitying, attention-seeking whines.

What is more, the self-styled victim is now claiming that all she wants is to have her reputation restored. This is an odd one. If her allegations of assault are genuine — or if even if they are just upheld — then what loss of reputation can she deem there to be? And if they are unfounded and the grievances she chose to publicise by doing the rounds of the chat-show circuit are groundless, then any damage to her reputation is of her own doing.

Not that things are any clearer over here concerning such matters. The proliferation of so-called date-rape cases is intensely worrying. Rape is an awful offence, and I don't see how sex with a fellow student you don't much like comes into that category. There is still the problem of reputation; I understand how it could ruin an innocent man's life if he is accused of rape. Despite a court's verdict, the idea that there's no smoke without fire prevails. We all know that.

I know there is a very good argument against allowing the defendant the same anonymity guaranteed to the plaintiff in such cases. I do see that it goes against the principles of democratic justice to have secret, closed trials. If you start with rape cases, why not murder? Before you know it, we're living in Idi Amin-land.

But I can't help thinking that if many more weak, unconvincing so-called date rape cases are brought, it will not only innocent men who lose their reputation, but even more innocent women, too. For not only will the real victims of rape be increasingly treated with suspicion and contempt, but so will women in general.

The law deems someone's reputation to have been harmed if the offence is such as to "expose him [our legal system clings to "him"] to hatred, ridicule or contempt, cause him to be shunned or avoided, or lowered him in the estimation of right-thinking people". How long will it be before defendants in rape cases which are not upheld start suing for loss of reputation?



Nigella Lawson

they stay to be battered — as if the question itself blames them for the battering. But why so? Anyway, it is not my intention to hold Mrs Clayton accountable for the behavior of her bully-boy colleagues, but I still cannot imagine what made her put up with it for so long.

I understand that the need to earn a living makes keeping the job you have the dominant imperative. Even more, I assume that, as with women who are attacked at home, those who are bullied at work receive such a blow to their self-esteem that they don't have the confidence to make a stand.

Unfortunately, though, whatever the psychological explanation, the fact that she did put up with it for so long means that the intimidation tactics of her colleagues did, in effect, work. If they victimised her, it is now indeed the case that her status, in the eyes of the world, is that of victim. In order to win, she has had to prove that. How demoralising to have to win justice at the cost of your reputation.

I can see, though, that it would have been more of a blow if Mrs Clayton hadn't won: then it would have seemed as if the taunts were OK.

I know that it is often just a cheap trick to cite the American way as evidence



Tim Parks: "Never does the world seem so freshly painted, so brightly enamelled, so new, for heaven's sake, as after the best sex. But, alas, it may be full of new complications, too"

When temptation strikes

MEN ONLY

The road to erotic passion can end in confusion, says Tim Parks

If Brahma is a more endearing creator than Jehovah, it is because he wasn't pleased with what he had made. He found the world dull and dusty. Death was the answer, suggested Siva. Living for ever, people were bored. A time limit would galvanise, give dignity. But in that case some way of replacing the population would have to be found.

Brahma brought together a few trusted fellows and explained what was required. The pleasure took them by surprise. What was that for? To put a fresh shine on the world, they were told. Otherwise it might get dusty again.

I'm always taken aback when people talk about the eroticism of food and drink, of sunbathing and massage. This is mere sensuality. Or avoiding the issue. No experience even remotely compares with true Eros, with long and lavish love-making. It is understandable that people should imagine it was tacked on to creation afterwards, so extravagant is the pleasure it brings, so far beyond what is necessary. Never does the world seem so freshly painted, so brightly enamelled, so new, for heaven's sake, as after the best sex. But, alas, it may be full of new complications, too.

A lesser authority than Brahma would have issued a health warning. Over billiards and beer, a friend is explaining why he is leaving his wife and two children. He's playing with unusual speed and precision. His eyes are brighter than the beer could account for. And the girl is 23, he explains. French. So intelligent. "Intelligently pert breasts?" I inquire. "Perceptively warm thighs?"

He laughs. He is deliriously proud, confused, unhappy. "I feel I was never really in love with my wife," he says.

Eroticism paints out the past. In this sense it is the most potent myth-making and myth-destroying power we have. How those first encounters are told and retold, cherished and savoured over and over again. How solid and irreplaceable they begin to seem. I did this, you said that. When your hand first... When your mouth... Beneath the superstructure of domestic economy, in-laws, even children, it is on this bedrock that marriage rests. But only once? Is it never to happen again? Suddenly solid ground is quicksand.

"As soon as I'm in the door, I feel suffocated. I married too young." Thus Franco, potting the black. "I never experienced real passion." Before *la jeune fille très intelligente*, he means. He is smoking, too, this evening. I have never seen him smoke before. "I feel I will die if I go home." I ask him if he wants more children. He doesn't. "Perhaps it's all a terrible mistake," he says, "but at least I will have had this passion." Should I tell him that when we first met he had seemed very passionate about his wife?

Women. Another Indian myth — sexist, if you wish to be offended — has it that when the gods became scared of a man, scared of his developing spiritual powers, they would send him a woman. Or they might send Indra to seduce his wife and make him jealous. In either case, the turbulent feelings would disperse the power he had accumulated. So Franco, whose expertise once took him round all the capitals of Europe, now finds his life in pieces. Lawyers, quarrels, returns, departures. Then more women, too. For if marriage has a way of declining into dusty routine, myth-making, too, can lapse into tawdry chronicle.

Eroticism has this in common with an addictive drug: that there is a coercive element to its pleasure with which part of us is in complicity, and part not. Thus, men have always tried to enjoy eroticism without being destroyed by it. Societies, religions can be defined in the way they deal with this conundrum. Polygamy, monogamy with repression, monogamy with affairs, monogamy with prostitutes, serial monogamy. Not to mention individual solutions of great ingenuity, or desperation: Victor Hugo with the door knocked through the wall of his office, to let in a girl each afternoon. Auden's flair for finding call-boys in every town. Picasso, who simply refused when wife and mistress demanded that he choose between them.

But perhaps the thing to remember when you wake up with a life full of fresh paint and tortuous complications is that eroticism wasn't invented for you, nor merely for the survival of the species, perhaps, but for a divinity's entertainment. Nothing gener-

ates so many opportunities for titillation and *Schadenfreude* as eroticism. Which is why it lies at the centre of so much narrative. How the gods thronged the balconies of heaven to see the consequences of Helen's betrayal! On the borders between mythology and history, that wily survivor Odysseus was the

first who learnt to trick the gods. And perhaps his smartest trick of all was that of lashing himself to the mast before the Sirens came within earshot. There are those, of course, who are happy to stand at the railings, even scan the horizon. Otherwise, choose your mast, find the ropes that suit you: sport, workaholicism,

celibacy with prayerbook and bell... But the kindest and toughest ropes of all are probably to be found in some suburban semi-detached with rowdy children and a woman who never allows the dust to settle for too long.

Tim Parks's novel *Europa* is published by Secker & Warburg on April 14, 1999.

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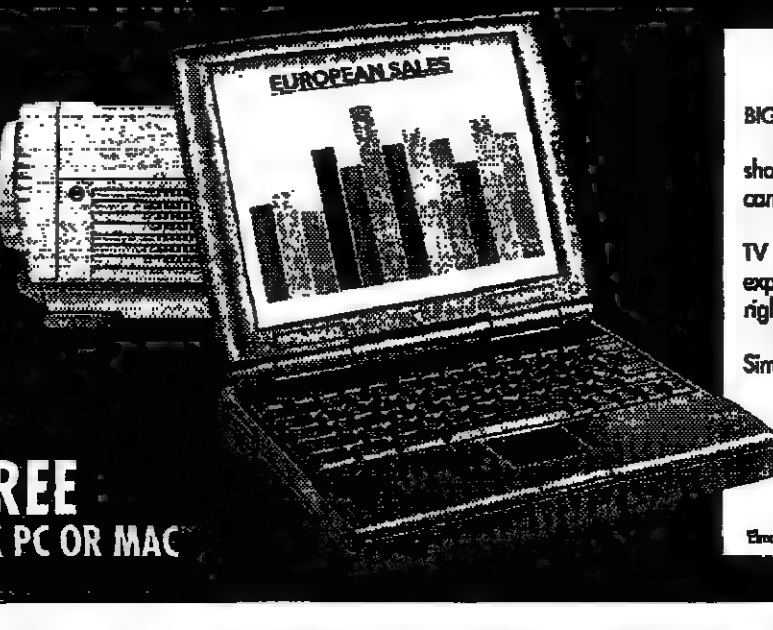
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Is Kosovo the Albanian apocalypse?

Timothy Garton Ash visits a province waiting to erupt

As Albania has descended into mayhem, Nato planners have agonised over the possibility of violence spilling into neighbouring Kosovo, where nearly two million Albanians live under Serb rule.

No one I spoke to in the dusty, battered and depressed province of Kosovo last week suggested that an Albanian insurrection was imminent. Even if large quantities of small arms were to be smuggled in from the plundered arsenals of Albania, the heavily armed and professionally trained Serb army could wreak terrible vengeance. "You see," both Serbs and Albanians told me, with chilling matter-of-factness, "there are some 700 purely Albanian villages. So the people there could all be killed."

Yet everyone speaks of the longer-term possibility of war — and the seeming impossibility of any peaceful solution. Kosovo has traditionally been regarded by Serbs as the mystical heartland of their great medieval state and national identity, their "Jerusalem". (How much of this is myth and how much reality we shall learn next year with the publication of a history of Kosovo by Noel Malcolm, author of *Bosnia: A Short History*.) In the 1980s, it was an autonomous province in the former Yugoslavia, with a largely Albanian population and administration. Many of the remaining Serbs were leaving, often being forced out.

Ten years ago, Slobodan Milosevic came to Kosovo and told the local Serbs "No one should dare to beat you!" With this battle-cry, he mounted the Serb nationalist horse and rode it — ably assisted by politicians of other nationalities, and especially by the Croat Franjo Tudjman — to the bloody destruction of Yugoslavia. Kosovo itself was placed under direct Serb administration. The Kosovar Albanians responded by declaring an independent Republic of Kosovo and holding extraordinary underground elections in which a majority voted for the "Democratic League of Kosovo". Its leader, Ibrahim Rugova, became "President of the Republic".

His headquarters is a large hut in the middle of a dusty bus-station, full of picture-book hawkers and spitters. At the door I was inconspicuously met by the "head of protocol" who ushered me in to see "the President". Mr Rugova told me about the underground state: the 18,000 schoolteachers it funds from unofficial taxes, which the Kosovar Albanians pay in addition to the official Serb ones; the independent university, the attempt at healthcare through an organisation named after Mother Teresa. (Later, I visited a state school divided by an internal Berlin Wall, so that Serb and Albanian children should never meet.) Mr Rugova's immediate demand is merely for an alleviation of the repression. While the Serb police dare not touch him, they regularly harass low-level activists. He

insists on Gandhi-esque peaceful means, and has explicitly cautioned his followers against following the example of armed insurrection across the border. But on the central goal he is quite unyielding: self-determination for his people, statehood for the republic which he claims already exists.

His main rival, Adem Demaci, sometimes called "the Albanian Mandela" on account of his 28 years in prison, sat opposite me on a chair in his new party headquarters, and, Gandhi-like, pulled up his legs into the lotus position. He might be prepared to settle for slightly less than Rugova: a republic within a very loose confederation with Serbia and Montenegro. But he wants more dramatic protest actions to achieve it. He has called on his followers to imitate the student and opposition demonstrators in Belgrade.

That is the Kosovar Albanian mainstream. But in the past year there have also been a number of terrorist attacks, with responsibility claimed by a Kosovo Liberation Army. Are these the work of impatient young radicals, like the young Palestinians in Gaza? Or — for this is the Balkans — are they actually encouraged by the Serbian leader? Back in Belgrade, even sober political observers speculate that a cornered Milosevic, faced with total economic collapse and massive popular calls for his resignation, might in desperation play the Kosovo card, provoking a terrorist assault or armed rising which he could then heroically suppress.

This may be far-fetched. But Kosovo remains a terrible problem for the diverse opposition parties in the Zajedno ("Together") coalition, which have won power in many cities and are gearing up for Serbian republican elections later this year. Not only are they far from together on this issue, but even those who privately want to concede most of the Kosovar Albanian demands feel that to do so publicly would be political suicide in a country still suffused with national self-pity.

Some have suggested a peaceful partition of Kosovo, giving Serbia its holy places, the mineral resources and main areas of Serb settlement, but these are not completely contiguous with the mother country. How the line could be drawn without bloodshed and large transfers of population, as in Bosnia, no one has yet explained.

Pathetically, people still look to the West, to "Europe" and above all to America for a solution. An international conference has been proposed, but who would now put their faith in the so-called "international community" and its endless mediators and conferences? I left with a horrible feeling that here, too, the lines may be drawn first in blood. And the Yugoslav tragedy that began in Kosovo may yet end in Kosovo, in this faraway province of which we still know nothing.



PACKAGING RULED TO BE TOO SIMILAR (Court case)

It's the voters wot win it

Politicians pay court to editors, but how much power do papers wield?

So it's all over bar the shouting. It's *The Sun* wot wins it. As yesterday, it's *The Sun* wot's won it. In 1995 Tony Blair flew to see Rupert Murdoch in Australia to audition as Prime Minister. The great man approved. Blessing was conferred. New Labour, old Commonwealth. No deals on media ownership, of course. Nothing so crude. These are honourable men who do not nod, nor even wink. Their treaties are fashioned on the wind and written of air, and are the closer for it. Yesterday the mighty organ swung left. Mr Blair's press officer, Alastair Campbell, achieved his ambition, to see a Labour *Sun* rising over Wapping. He has earned his peerage and the chairmanship of Burnley Football Club. The election is over.

Up to a point, your lordship. The 1970 election was the last in which *The Sun* came out for Labour. Just after Mr Murdoch bought the paper. The nation defied the pollsters and voted Tory. I doubt if the electorate will be so indisposed this time. But Mr Murdoch told Mr Blair two years ago that if their filtration were ever consummated "we will end up making love like two porcupines, very carefully". If I were Mr Blair I might prefer *The Sun* the way it was.

Yet news that this one paper had come out for Labour sent the BBC into a frenzy of excitement. The *Today* programme could not conceal its glee. If a foreign proprietor had taken a Labour line and turned it Tory, there would have been howls of outrage about foreign interference in British politics, not least from the Labour Party. This time, I heard not a peep about proprietorial interference from Labour or the BBC. We can only marvel at the infinite mutability of human affairs.

There is nothing like a general election to plunge the upmarket media into an obsession with working-class opinion. Pundits traipse the provinces which they know only as constituency names. So-called "ordinary people" are dragged like Fidelio's prisoners into the political daylight. They are granted a soundbite of their choice before being herded back in the slammer.

At such moments, the world becomes fascinated by the editorial juices of *The Sun*. Most other papers are known territory, pro-Labour or pro-Tory. *The Sun* is a riddle inside an enigma. Its image of eccentric independence comes not just from offshore ownership and vast circula-

tion. The paper is deemed to enjoy a hotline to the mental processes of the British proletariat, albeit mostly through the latter's nether regions.

Such vast readership must bespeak a vaster power. Since *The Sun*'s own mental processes are often hard to fathom, politicians invest them with the wisdom of Delphos. They wait outside the temple, on steps incarnadine with ministerial sacrifice, while proprietor and Editor enter into conclave. The fate of the nation is held to depend on the outcome.

The rising status of the media is a much-noted feature of British politics. Every memoir testifies to this. The principal reason is the Prime Minister's sensitivity to press criticism. None of his predecessors has been quite so thin-skinned. His remark, yesterday dismissing *The Sun*'s move as less important than the media thinks brought a hollow laugh from editors accustomed to Mr Major's telephone calls complaining at the most trivial slight and pleading for kinder treatment. An Editor of *The Sun* once replied by telling Mr Major that a large bucket of turd would be on his desk next morning.

The Prime Minister is like an actor who starts each day by re-reading his worst reviews. Political comment is by its nature not flattering to politicians. For Mr Major to start work with such ritual self-abasement must be debilitating. Yet he is addicted to the punishment and reference to it peppers his off-the-cuff utterances. His staff cannot rid him of the habit.

The reason is that Mr Major has isolated himself from most of the traditional conduits of Downing Street peer-group review. He has all but disbanded his party in local government. Central Office organisation and research department are pale shadows of their old selves. Elder statesmen are not consulted, and unsympathetic backbenchers are treated as enemies, possibly lunatics.

Mr Major is left only with the press. It offers the one independent running commentary on the Cab-

inet's performance. The Tory press is treated as a stand-alone proxy for Tory supporters in the country. Harassed ministers accord it ridiculous over-importance, in part because their boss does. After the 1992 victory, Lord McAlpine of West Green heaped credit on the tabloids. He said they won the election for the Tories, and if politicians "in their hour of victory are tempted to believe otherwise they are in very real trouble next time". This is bizarre. Just as Downing Street expects the whips to deliver the Commons majority, so it seems to expect the *Tory* press to deliver the nation.

Tabloid front pages are portrayed as the Batenswili of our age. This is hokey. The search for the cause of the Tories' narrow 1992 election victory has yielded a mountain of research, on the gro-

tesque premiss that credit could not possibly go to Mr Major himself. The principal evidence pointing to *The Sun* was marshalled by Brian MacArthur and Martin Union, drawn from MORI data gathered in the last week of the campaign. It showed a 4 per cent switch to the Tories among *Sun* readers, ostensibly in response to its strident pro-Tory campaign, compared with lesser swings for *Express* and *Mail* readers. *Sun* readers formed almost half the electorate in key marginals such as Basildon. Hence the extra swing was taken as highly significant. On this basis, the paper could be claimed as moving 200,000 votes from Labour to Tory.

This view has not gone unchallenged. In *Labour's Last Chance*, John Curtice and Holli Semetko pulled a large panel of voters during the campaign. They found a small swing from Labour to the Liberal Democrats and a smaller one to the Conservatives. But this did not occur among readers of pro-Tory tabloids, who, if anything, swung away from the Tories, a finding that appears to conflict with MORI. "There was no evidence from our panel," wrote the authors, "that there was any relationship between vote-switching during

the election campaign and the partisanship of a voter's newspaper." Curtice and Semetko pointed out that newspaper readers are now notoriously inclined to shift papers in response to non-political inducements, a fact well-known to editors. Who knows what voting pattern they take with them. Nor can we really tell how many voters might switch at election time to papers that better accord with their own views.

Newspapers love to be credited with far-seeing wisdom. Yet when *The Sun* was accused of exerting huge influence in 1992, it answered that this was "an insult to the 14 million people who voted Conservative". Such disclaimers should be treated like those of television producers denying that their sex and violence films could possibly influence viewers. If those who run the media really believe they have no influence over their consumers, why don't they say so to their advertisers?

My own view is that the support of the press is certainly better than a poke in the eye, especially given the enforced impartiality of broadcasting. If I were a politician I would rather have a newspaper with me than against me, as much for my own morale as for any putative influence over the electorate. The relationship between politicians and papers is that of lover and wayward mistress. The latter is always on the point of leaving. Rows are always painful. Never in recent history has the *Tory* press been so persistently hostile to a *Tory* government as it has since 1992. The affair has gone on too long and grown stale. *The Sun*'s editorial — a gem of terse prose — might have been written of just such an affair: "The Tories have all the right policies but all the wrong faces... after 18 years, they have become sloppy, divided and tired... they need time to sort themselves out."

The Tories' best hope is that readers of *The Sun* have dissembled to the pollsters all along. They never noticed its politics. They will not start now. But then only fools and buck-passers blame the press for election results. Newspapers are about oiling democracy's wheels, not replacing them. They may try to relieve the voters of their sovereignty. But the voters have a cursed habit of making up their own minds. They defied prediction in 1945, 1970 and 1992.

The only way to tolerate the next six weeks is to treat the race as deliciously open — or go to bed and stay there.

Simon Jenkins

Surprise pitch

AFTER more than 45 years on Westminster's green benches, one would not expect Tony Benn, MP for Chesterfield, to resort to political gimmickry to secure his return at the election. Benn was spotted the other day with a hydrangea-sized blue rosette in his buttonhole, watching a football match.

From David Mellor, this kind of laddish behaviour wouldn't raise an eyebrow. But from Benn, a pipe-smoking tea-drinker, it is unusual in the extreme.

He had turned out to watch Chesterfield Football Club beat Wrexham in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup earlier this month, donning their blue and white. Yesterday, local supporters said they could not remember seeing Tony Benn at the ground before. Sheffield Wednesday supporter and fellow Labour MP Roy Hattersley was scathing. "I imagine it's the first time he's been to a football match in his life," he said. "He was sporting cheap rosettes and looking absolutely ridiculous."

Mr Benn, however, insisted that he supports his constituency team and has previously watched them play at Wembley. He said he was delighted by their success in the FA

Cup. "They've had an electric influence on the town. Everyone's walking ten-feet tall. I'll follow them to Old Trafford to watch them against Middlesbrough."

● A dutiful cleaner at an Amsterdam art gallery swept up a pile of ash and cigarette butts. He wasn't to know they represented the work of Japanese sculptor Keizo Abo



Benn: new colours?

intended to express "the smoker's dilemma when he knows he should stop but can't".

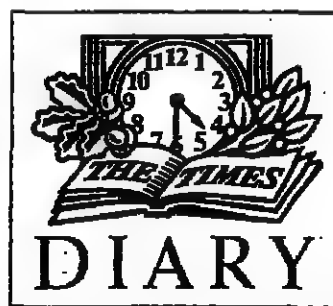
Head man

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S insistence on hiring a British mercenary force to help to put down a long-running insurrection, as reported in yesterday's *Times*, will have come as little surprise to Jeremy Hanley, MP — a man who goes down big in the South Pacific.

Visiting the country in October, he was accorded a personal guard armed with a bow and arrow and wearing little more than a skirt of feathers and a Group 4 Security armband.

Though happy in the custody of his warrior, Hanley was alarmed by a conversation that he happened to overhear between the British High Commissioner's wife and the Governor General's wife. "I have three children," said the former, "a banker, a lawyer, and a headhunter." The latter nodded. "Yes, we have many headhunters over here too."

● The politically correct are tightening their grip at the BBC. A documentary tonight on the *Fens* presented by my colleague Jonathan Meades originally bore the



lively title Land of the Superdykes. For fear of putting off certain viewers, it was renamed Double Dutch.

Walk on

RAMBLERS in Gloucestershire would be well advised to avoid Gatombe Park, where they risk a frosty reception from its chateleine, the Princess Royal. Interviewed in this week's *Stroud News*, a tremendous local rag, she has little time for the anoraked classes.

"Farmers are not wardens who manage a whole load of paths for... scramblers and rambblers," she says, adding that bridledways should be reserved for "horse-drawn traffic".

Her dislike of pedestrian thoroughfares put her off buying Highgrove, now home to her brother the Prince of Wales, when she was

house-hunting 10 years ago. "There was a footpath running through the middle which we had no chance of moving."

Revelatory

IN THE front row yesterday morning at Labour's first full press conference of the election campaign was the Tory MP Jerry Hayes's homosexual former researcher Paul Stone. After his unsavoury revelations in the *News of the World*, Stone has moved over to Labour and claims to have been in touch with several Labour MPs.

"If I could be useful to Tony Blair



and the party I would love to help," he said by way of an explanation for his attendance. "They're a lot better on gay issues and if I can do anything to publicise these, then I will." By last night Labour was denying all knowledge of his interest. "We've no one registered under that name, and no one remembers seeing him there," said an official.

Late smile

FINALLY, there is a glimmer of a smile on the face of Michael "Captain Grumpy" Atherton, as a result of a posthumous gift from the late Willie Rushton, cartoonist and satirist. In a rare moment of leisure, Atherton was browsing through some prints in a London art gallery last weekend when the establishment's owner handed him a Rushton original of left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell.

"I couldn't have asked him to pay," says Jack Duncan, founder of the William Rushton archive. "Willie was a mad-keen cricketer and would have been honoured for the England captain to have it." Fixture list permitting, Atherton has agreed to open a Rushton retrospective planned by Mr Duncan later this year.

P.H.S

Alan Coren



Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye

Monday, March 17

Dear Diary: One is a bit glum. One has just said goodbye to one's Prime Minister, and one's Prime Minister did that endearingly awkward little bow he does, and gave that charming little smile he gives, and the door closed, and now one hears the creak of the fourth stair as his shoe depresses it, such a sensible shoe, so shined, so neatly laced, almost certainly made in Northampton, and one is decidedly feeling a trifle low. One rather suspects that the next Prime Minister might wear frightfully famous Italian loafers with those little tassels on. The sort dogs snap at.

The object of his visit was to inform one that the date of the general election was to be May 1. He made a little joke about Labour Day, as one would expect of him. One rather fears one has heard the last of his quite excellent little jokes: one will always remember that delightful story about the Irish chicken and the road. How one laughed! One rather suspects that the next Prime Minister might not tell jokes with Irish chickens in them. The greater likelihood is that he will tell very long jokes indeed, of which one will never entirely grasp the point.

One observes that one's Prime Minister did not eat his second Hob-Nob. That is uncharacteristic of him. Perhaps he is a bit glum, too. As he has so often told one, he is very partial to a Hob-Nob. Not quite as partial, mind, as he used to be to the squashed-fly biscuit, about the disappearance of which one was once given a most illuminating lecture. It seems they cannot be obtained in any of the Huntingdon supermarkets for love or money. One rather suspects this not to be a subject upon which the next Prime Minister would be able to shed any light. Worse, one fears he might try to interest one in polemics. Or squids.

Or Web sites. One has heard that he is eager to put all one's loyal subjects onto this. One has, of course, just been put onto it oneself, but one does not have the faintest idea what it is, except that one's loyal subjects may now access, one believes the word is, one's soft furnishings, pictures, pot plants, and so forth. One is not entirely happy with this. One's current Prime Minister never raised fashionable technologies. We did, however, discuss our first bicycles in some depth. By happy chance, we both owned Rudges. His had drop handlebars and three speeds and a parrier which held two bottles of Tizer and enough bread pudding for four people, though it lacked a dynamo, because these cost £2 to 3d, and he was saving up for new pads. It seems the buckles on his old ones came undone when he ran. He is most enlightening about cricket: one had never quite understood the googly, before. One rather suspects the next Prime Minister might not be interested in cricket at all. Football seems to be his game — one has seen him, on the television, actually playing it. One fears the worst for future weekly chats: one has scant interest in soccer, especially since one's Park Rangers were relegated.

One also understands that the next Prime Minister is a member of Trimdon Colliery and Deaf Hill Working Men's Club, which, one somehow doubts to be a prime source of jolly anecdote. One could, one supposes, inquire how Deaf Hill came by its name, but the likelihood is that the next Prime Minister would prefer to address matters of greater pith. He went to Oxford and is rumoured to be something of a thinker, whereas the current Prime Minister and one have three O levels and an AFS diploma in lorry-maintenance between us: a situation which, how might one put it, does much to prevent us from boring one another stiff.

And then there is the matter of wives.

One has just peeked from the window, Diary, and watched him walking to his motor car with that special little lode of his. One will rather miss that lode. Oh, see, he has given his special little grin to the driver. One will rather miss that grin. And the way he settles his spectacles with his forefinger. A rather nice man. How difficult it must be for one's loyal subjects to cast their vote! One is really rather grateful, all things considered, not to have one.



PUBLISH OR BE DAMNED

Sleaze cannot be kept under wraps until after the election

The calling of the election has seen attention, naturally, move from Westminster to the hustings. But important judgments at the polls depend on business which Parliament seems fated not to finish. In preparation for the campaign, the Commons is busy with itself with tying up loose ends. There is, one which has been left hanging, like a suspended noose. The report by Sir Gordon Downey into the "cash for questions" allegations against Neil Hamilton and others will not, now, be published until after the election. It is insupportable that an investigation as important as this should, after the months lavished on it, spend the election under lock and key. When democracy needs them most, watchdogs should not be kept in quarantine.

No one is well-served by the suppression of this report. The electors of Tatton will be invited to pass their own sentence on Mr Hamilton at the polls, without having heard the evidence which might either condemn or exonerate him. The Tories have claimed collectively, as loudly as Mr Hamilton has individually, that they have been unfairly tarnished by sleaze. The one document which might, however, restore some confidence will languish unread for the duration of the campaign.

The Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes pointed out yesterday that it is John Major's dissolution timing which apparently precludes publication. Voters may believe that the Prime Minister could have been motivated by a desire to suppress the report. If so, far from limiting the damage that sleaze might cause, he has only given voters another reason to suspect sharp practice. Mr Major surely cannot want this election to proceed with his candidates awaiting Sir Gordon's judgment.

When the inquiry was set up, in defiance of opposition calls for a full tribunal, Mr

Major said he did not want this matter to be sent into "the long grass". That, however, is where matters now rest and the Prime Minister cannot hide behind parliamentary procedure. Sir Gordon, working a four-day week, has hardly been the Stakhanov of the committee corridors but the primary fault is not his, but the Government's. Lord Nolan may investigate matters after the election but the Tories should want to present the voters with a clean bill of health, not a post-mortem. If the Conservatives want to preserve their reputation they should publish, or be damned.

Although the electorate is short-changed by the non-appearance of the report, the most conspicuous victim is Mr Hamilton. It is difficult to inspire sympathy for the former minister, but in this manner he deserves his portion. The uncontested evidence of his stay at the Paris Ritz at Mohamed Al Fayed's expense and his relationship with the lobbyist Ian Greer raise worrying questions about his judgment. They are not, however, central to the charge against him of corruption. The allegation that Mr Hamilton accepted cash for asking parliamentary questions is bitterly contested.

The main evidence against Mr Hamilton on this charge has, so far, come from Mr Al Fayed and his employees. Thirteen days ago his extraordinary allegation that the Home Secretary had accepted a £1.5 million bribe was "authoritatively" dismissed by Sir Gordon, who found no evidence to support Mr Al Fayed's claims. Sir Gordon is not the first investigator to find Mr Al Fayed's evidence less than reliable. If the electors of Tatton want to know whether or not their Member is a "liar and a cheat" before deciding to vote for him, they cannot, on past record, take Mr Al Fayed's word for it. They need Sir Gordon's.

Counter-claims on tax and spending

From the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Sir, William Waldegrave deceives himself ("Labour's liaison with Leviathan", March 13). He says that Conservatives distrust Leviathan. This from a Government which has centralised power on an unparalleled level and which spends exactly the same share of national income now as it inherited in 1979-79.

He misleads himself elsewhere as well. The UK growth rate over the last 18 years is less than that achieved by the last Labour Government and is less than the European Union average.

His claims that public sector borrowing is under control don't stand up. By the end of the current financial year the Government will have had to borrow £66 billion more than they promised in 1992. The national debt has doubled since John Major became Prime Minister.

And his claims about our pledged spending commitments don't bear examination either. Indeed, these claims, frequently repeated, are widely discredited. Mr Waldegrave's problem is that, increasingly, no one believes a word this Government says. They sought the trust of the British people in 1992. They have now lost that trust completely.

Yours sincerely,
AUSTIN DARLING,
Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury,
House of Commons,
March 14.

From Mr Paul Ashton

Sir, Lord Healey (letter, March 15) may well be right in claiming that the average family is paying more in taxes as a proportion of income today than in 1978-79 when he was Chancellor; but the tone of his letter suggests that a Labour government would have done better. We may still need some convincing of this.

For example, his party has consistently voted against income tax rate cuts. If the 1978-79 tax rates were still in force now, along with indexed thresholds, the proportion of average earnings taken in tax and national insurance contributions would, I calculate, be almost five percentage points higher today (30.6 per cent against 25.9 per cent).

Further, for Labour to have done better than the present Government on spending as a proportion of GDP, it would have to be spending less than the Government is now doing. I would hazard to guess that not many of us think that likely.

Labour has come a long way in moderating its tax-and-spend policies, but it is a bit much to ask us to believe that taxes and spending would be as low or lower now had Lord Healey's party been in power since 1979.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL ASHTON,
37 Benbow Avenue, Langney Point,
Eastbourne, East Sussex,
March 15.

From Sir David Mitchell

MP for Hampshire North West (Conservative)

Sir, Before the last general election John Major made it abundantly clear that he had no intention of increasing taxes. The Opposition attacks him for 22 increases (you can just get to that figure but it takes a bit of mental agility). However, in doing so Labour raises the central question of what it would have done had it been in government in the circumstances in which John Major's Chancellor found himself.

The recession continued longer and deeper than expected. Spending on unemployment and associated benefits rose, government receipts from VAT and corporation tax fell. The Government had either to increase tax or print the money to cover the shortfall.

Is Labour's hidden message that it would have, and would in future, print and return to soaring inflation, as it did before?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID MITCHELL,
House of Commons,
March 17.

Local taxation

From Councillor Sir Jeremy Beecham

Sir, Sir Ronald Watson (letter, March 7) appears to criticise my view that it is necessary for there to be a shift in the proportion of local authority income from the amount raised centrally to that raised locally.

Yet local accountability is impossible without a more explicit connection between local expenditure and local taxation. Sir Ron himself has in the past recognised this in his calls for capping to be ended in order, as he has put it, that local councils should not be allowed to claim either that they are spending at a level permitted by central government or that their inability to provide adequate local services is inhibited by central government.

He also omits to mention that the present Government's own plans for shadow a decrease in the proportion of central funding.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY BEECHAM,
Chairman, Association of Metropolitan Authorities,
35 Great Smith Street, SW1,
March 11.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Dorrell's plans for long-term residential care for elderly

From the Executive Director of ARPOSO

Sir, Stephen Dorrell presents his scheme for long-term residential care of the elderly as a major policy decision affecting everyone (report, March 13). In fact, it will do no more than assist a tiny proportion of those who must sell their homes in order to pay for such care. Even they will achieve this only at very considerable cost and with no guarantee that, in the end, the funds will be allocated as they desire.

In June 1996 the National Association of Pension Funds, giving evidence to the Commons Health Committee, stated that a couple aged 65 would have to pay £315 per month to cover an average-size house. Although figures now being quoted may be slightly lower than this, such estimates are entirely beyond the reach of most people. Indeed FFP Lifetime has stated that its policyholders typically have assets of more than £250,000.

What is of equal concern is the manner in which funds are eventually made available. It must be proved that the person can no longer perform certain "activities for daily living", with criteria being arbitrarily fixed by the insurance company. In many cases payments will then be made direct to the care provider.

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that policy of this kind is mere tokenism, diverting attention from the real problem, which is the growing neglect of the 95 per cent of dependent people who are cared for in their own homes and for whom essential services are rapidly disappearing.

Yours faithfully,
DONALD W. STEELE,
Executive Director,
ARPOSO (Association of Retired and Persons Over 50),
Greencoat House,
Francis Street, SW1,
March 13.

From the Community Care Manager of the Independent Healthcare Association

Sir, Despite the comment by Chris Smith, Shadow Health Secretary — "the triumph of dogma over common sense" — the IHCA believes that there is much in Mr Dorrell's White Paper which can be supported by all political parties.

France and Africa

From the Ambassador of France

Sir, I was very surprised to read in your editorial of March 12, "Back to Fashoda", some particularly harsh comments on French policy vis-à-vis central Africa.

France is no way suffering from "Fashoda syndrome" and, in our view, the rivalry which you allege exists between French and British interests in Africa belongs completely to the past. Just like our major partners, we are directing our efforts on the African continent towards promoting the rule of law, good governance and sustainable development.

As regard the crisis in Zaire's South Kivu province, France is working in close co-operation with the United States and the United Kingdom and shares with them the desire to see the rapid and full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1097, unanimously adopted on February 18.

It is against this background and because the situation of the hundreds of thousands of Kivu refugees has become tragic that on March 10 the President of the Republic issued a solemn appeal to the international community immediately to stop the fighting and provide the humanitarian aid which is most urgently needed.

Our policy is also directed towards guaranteeing Zaire's sovereignty and territorial integrity, ending foreign interference and promoting dialogue in the run-up to Zairean elections and the organisation of an international conference bringing together the countries of the Great Lakes region in order to achieve a lasting solution to the current crisis. I note that the peace plan of the United Nations Secretary-General's special representative and the OAU has endorsed these objectives.

Finally, I am especially shocked to read the allegation that France "armed and backed the Hutu killers in Rwanda". Right from the onset of the Rwandan crisis, we have been striving, harder than any other country, to promote a political solution and mobilise the international community in order to prevent ethnic clashes. Indeed, France stopped sending any military hardware to Rwanda on April 8, 1994 — ie, before the United Nations imposed an embargo on arms supplies to that country on May 17, 1994. Furthermore, France was the first to use the term "genocide" to describe the events which took place in Rwanda after April 6, 1994, and actively supported the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal to try those responsible for those crimes.

France's action in the whole of Africa is not in any way prompted by revanchism, but by the firm belief that only by acting as one can the international community effectively help Africa cope with the immense challenges confronting it.

Yours faithfully,
JEAN GUEGUINOU,
Ambassador of France,
58 Knightsbridge, SW1,
March 13.

Politics of hope

From Mr Nicolas Walter

Sir, If the atrocities of the French Revolution were committed "in the name" of liberty, equality and fraternity and the atrocities of the Russian Revolution were committed "under the same banner", as is boldly but wrongly suggested by Sir Bernard Kaufman (letter, March 10), in what name and under what banner have the atrocities of the "Judeo-Christian tradition" been committed?

The Old Testament is full of horrors in this life and the New Testament threatens more in the next, and for 3,000 years there have been religious wars and persecutions, stonings and burnings, crusades and inquisitions, witch-hunts and pogroms, slavery and segregation.

If God, Jesus and the Bible are not demeaned by the fact that they have been taken in vain by some of their followers, why should liberty, equality and fraternity be demeaned by the fact that they have, too?

Yours etc,
NICOLAS WALTER,
Nationalist Press Association,
88 Islington High Street, N1,
March 10.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

parties. Indeed, a spokesman for the Labour Party has already spoken in favour of some of the proposed regulatory changes.

Ending the legal distinction between residential care and nursing homes will enable providers to give a more flexible service in line with changing client needs; and national benchmarks for care standards will help stop the inconsistent approaches taken by regulating authorities.

Social services will remain major purchasers for the immediate future and, as such, will still be hugely influential in deciding how the market for care will develop. I can see no well-founded argument for them continuing to provide and regulate it as well.

Yours faithfully,
A. MACKAY,
Community Care Manager,
Independent Healthcare Association,
22 Little Russell Street, WC1,
March 14.

From the Chief Executive of Scope

Sir, Mr Dorrell's White Paper presents a dramatic shift in policy, placing responsibility for care needs onto the individual disabled person and their family. If the Government contracts out of care provision, not only of residential services but also the vast amount of care services provided to people in their own homes, disabled people could be left without choice and without a safety net.

Yet again we see the rights and needs of disabled people sidelined in favour of penny-pinching policies.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BREWSTER,
Chief Executive,
Scope (formerly The Spastics Society),
12 Park Crescent, W1.

From Mr Robert Waterhouse

Sir, A simple way to deal with the problem of the cost of residential care for the elderly would surely be through death duties. Alteration to the current exemption system, so that the estates of all persons dying over retirement age (irrespective of whether they had themselves benefited from residential care) were subject to a modest and clearly defined deduction, for example as a percentage.

Such a system, I suggest, would be

simple to administer and fair to everyone; it would be vastly superior to the Government's proposals involving insurance companies, the main beneficiary of which would, I suspect, be those companies and not the citizens of this country.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT WATERHOUSE,
5 Heatherbank, Chislehurst, Kent,
March 12.

From Ms Tessa Harding

Sir, Professor Alan Williams of the Centre for Health Economics at the University of York suggests that discriminating against the elderly is an "appropriate" way of rationing scarce health resources (report, March 14). Is he seriously saying that this country is so poor that it cannot afford healthcare for its older people?

If we spend a lower proportion of our GDP (under 7 per cent) on health than nearly all OECD countries, it is because we choose to, not out of economic necessity.

Certainly we could and should be doing more to help older people retain their independence. We could be making sure people's homes are warm and well insulated; that public transport is convenient and accessible; that corner shops and village post offices stay open; that there is enough good primary and other domiciliary care available when people need it. To take these "unfashionable measures" would make both human and economic sense and help people remain independent, as they wish. But we are not doing that either at present.

It is not a question of choosing between those sensible measures and high-quality healthcare; we need both. Once we start making judgments about the value of people's lives on the basis that they belong to a particular group or class in society, we are on a very slippery slope. Discrimination on grounds of age is no more acceptable than discrimination on grounds of race, gender or class.

Yours etc,
TESSA HARDING,
(Head of Planning and Development),
Help the Aged,
St James's Walk,
Clerkenwell Green, EC1,
March 17.

Cloning limitations

From Dr Christopher Gardner-Thorpe

Sir, Mr Alan Challenor (letter, March 13) notes that the influence of the environment "creates individuality that cannot be reproduced by cloning" — but is there evidence of this?

Why do cells which replicate during later life fail to resemble youthful cells? Skin is a good example. We do not seem to produce childlike characteristics in each new tissue repair. Presumably some memory process is ongoing and this may include memory of environmental factors. Thus a clone may include characteristics and memory acquired during the lifetime of the donor.

Could cloning from long-dead human tissue lead, perhaps after refinement of the technique in the years to come, to individuals who could tell us about decades gone by? The idea may seem horrifying but it is intriguing and not capable of disproof.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER GARDNER-THORPE
(Consultant neurologist),
The Coach House,
1a College Road, Exeter, Devon,
March 14.

From Mr Charles Dodd

Sir, Mr Nathan Griggs's prediction of an "Equal rights for clones" campaign (letter, March 15) need not concern us yet awhile. What we need to watch out for now is the promotional message: "You're never alone with a clone."

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES DODD,
Solway, 55 West Street,
Corfe Castle, Dorset,
March 15.

From Mrs M. M. Robinson

Sir, Miss Barbara Warford (letter, March 15) need have no worries about who would programme the video in a world full of female clones. Most adolescent females, if told that they have to be out of the house when the Spice Girls are due to appear on television, will learn to programme any video in a matter of minutes.

They will also probably work out how to return the machine to avoid Channel 5 interference if necessary.

Yours faithfully,
J. A. ROBINSON,
Cobdown,
Copt Hall Road, Ighiteam, Kent,
March 15.

From Mr Frank Rich

Sir, Miss Wanford wonders if we could dispense with the entire male population.

The task of programming the video would, of course, be performed entirely by grandchildren. Within a fortnight, however, the world would be ruled by spiders living in bathrooms.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK RICH,
9 Garden Close,
Hampton, Middlesex,
March 16.

LAKE IN THE DRINK

Fundraising scandal claims its first political victim

With the withdrawal of Anthony Lake as his prospective CIA Director, President Clinton has suffered the first outright political defeat of his second term. There has been much protest and anger from the Oval Office about the allegedly unfair treatment of his nominee. A poisonous atmosphere of pure partisanship has been blamed for the demise of a clearly qualified candidate. The confirmation process has been condemned as an impediment to the recruitment of worthy citizens to serve in public office.

Much of this is disingenuous. Mr Lake was always a controversial choice to head the Central Intelligence Agency. His background is in the academic world rather than the defence community from which such figures have usually been drawn. He had, at best, a modest record as National Security Adviser in Mr Clinton's first term. During that tenure he had concealed from Congress his knowledge that Iran was providing military assistance to Bosnia's Muslims.

The President moved him from that post as part of a wide-ranging restructuring of his foreign policy team and offered him the CIA position as an alternative. The previous incumbent, John Deutch, had been dropped for admitting publicly that Saddam Hussein had been strengthened by the fratricide among Iraqi Kurds last year. From the moment his name was floated, the Senate intelligence committee made it quite clear that he would be subject to intense scrutiny.

The same Republican Senate that has been accused of vindictiveness accepted virtually all Mr Clinton's other major appointments without dispute. The role of CIA Director has always been treated with exceptional sensitivity. Until the early 1970s Congress had minimal influence over intelligence activities. Since then, Capitol Hill has demanded independent figures whom it

trusted. In 1977, a Democratic Senate informed President Carter that his choice, Theodore Sorenson, would not do. In 1991, President Bush's preference, Robert Gates, barely survived a Senate vote. Mr Lake was at least as contentious this time.

His fate was sealed when he became embroiled in the assorted fundraising scandals that have haunted Mr Clinton since his re-election. The FBI had informed National Security Council staff last June that associates of the Chinese Government were attempting to steer money towards the Democratic Party — a move that was both obviously undesirable and patently illegal. This information apparently never reached Mr Lake nor was it sent to the White House.

On Monday it emerged that Mr Lake had also not been informed that his office had failed to prevent Roger Tamraz, an oil financier, from meeting Mr Clinton. That liaison had been promoted by the chairman of the Democratic National Committee who believed he could solicit a large donation if the President would co-operate. The fact that their proposed sponsor has been wanted in Lebanon on embezzlement charges for a decade seemingly bothered neither party nor President.

The current charged environment in Washington certainly contributed to Mr Lake's downfall but did not exclusively create it. Politics in the American capital has largely ground to a halt while Republicans seek to extract further documentation on how the Clinton-Gore campaign was financed. Those efforts will continue until the Justice Department selects an independent counsel to investigate the affair. It is now as much in Mr Clinton's interests as his opponents that such an appointment be made. In either case Mr Lake is unlikely to be the last casualty of the China connection.

CULTURAL CAMPAIGNS

The British arts festival season is democracy in action

Do not despair. For the next six weeks there is life other than the general election. May 1 is polling day. But it is also the first day of the Glasgow Mayfest, which will continue all month to celebrate all the arts throughout the city. And in it there will be world premieres, famous companies from abroad, drama and controversy, probably about Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's opera *Resurrection*.

And Glasgow is just one of the season of British arts festivals that will run from now until October. Today our Arts Pages publish a selection of 50 of the brightest and best of them. From Easter onwards not a day will pass without festivals in some remote corner, country town or crowded inner city of the land. They range from the blockbusters, such as Edinburgh and Cheltenham, Bath and Brighton, to the specialist, such as Aldeburgh for contemporary music, and York for the early kind. Notting Hill's Carnival has become as famous as those of Rio or New Orleans. There is rock and pop in all their varieties at Glastonbury, Phoenix and Reading, theatre at Chichester, Shakespeare at Arundel, opera at Glyndebourne and the Eisteddfod at Llangollen.

Some festivals are very old. This summer brings the 103rd season of the BBC's Promenade Concerts and the 50th of the Edinburgh Festival. The Hereford Three Choirs is Europe's oldest choral festival. Some festivals are new. This is the second year of the Docklands Festival, and the first

of the Daphne Du Maurier Festival in Cornwall. Depending on how the count is taken, there are now about 500 festivals during the British season. This poll does not include the thousands of Muggleonian pageants and pig-roastings that last for only a weekend. The number grows every year. Often the standard is extremely high, ambitious and eclectic, bringing top-quality culture in all its international forms to those who live remote from the big cities.

The connection between politics and the arts is closer than is often recognised. Festivals make opportunity, choice and ownership of lasting goods available to all. They can turn the cultural have-nots into cultural haves. It is no accident that the first democracy was founded by the society that invented festivals. Those great celebrations of the first tragedy and comedy were a cement of civil society and a chance to display the genius, as well as the might and wealth, of Athens to the world. The British theatre grew out of the medieval mystery plays. These will be played again at festivals this year, as they have been for more than seven centuries.

Life without the arts makes a barren and uncivil society. The great drama of the general election will occupy centre stage in Britain for the next six weeks. But at the same time the festivals of Britain will show that there is life after politics, connected and commenting on it.

Science: the bitter pill forced down once a year

Why does the Sun still go round the Earth?

Time once again for National Brainwashing Week. Hype as insidious as Mother's Day is now in progress to convince us that we ought to pay more attention to the old dear. I refer, of course, to science. National Science Week was dreamt up four years ago by the Department of Trade and Industry to give all those worthy enterprises that already knock themselves out in the name of science a chance to do more of it with the hope that this time some of the "don't cares" will pay attention.

I have nothing against science. Years ago I was chairman of the Association of British Science Writers for two years. Field trips, such as going to see the dinosaur tracks in the Connecticut River Valley or the CERN particle accelerator near Geneva, are among my cherished memories. But I do hate Thought Police, and what is being done in this week, which has no particular claim on the calendar except the theme gap between Mother's Day and Easter, feels like propaganda. Newspapers are pretty immune but the BBC has swallowed it whole.

In aid of what? The one conclusion to be drawn from previous science weeks is that they have had no effect whatsoever. Belief in the supernatural, the irrational, the paranormal has never been higher. Many newspapers would sooner dispense with their weather reports than with their astrologers. Every so often a poll shows that many people still think that the Sun goes round the Earth: it's just common sense, as we can all see for ourselves every night when the sun goes down.

For the converted, Britain is well served. The science programmes on radio and television, and the pages in the newspapers, are very good. BBC2's *Horizon*, at its new grown-up time of 9.25pm on Thursdays, is drawing well over five million viewers a week — impressive when you consider that the alien-haunted *X-Files* gets seven million. Why not tell some other branch of knowledge that it ought to try harder to spread enlightenment? Why not National Economics Week? I'm sure we all need help telling the difference between GDP and GNP.

I don't buy the argument that Dolly the cloned sheep has made science more interesting to a wider public. What excites people is ethics, religion and survival, not science. They are alarmed at threats to their sense of identity and to their cherished beliefs. They want to know what the law should do to control future research. What they do not want to hear is the scientific truth: that nurture is as important as nature in shaping the individual, sheep or child. Dr Steve Jones, the geneticist, puts it best: "If you want

to design your son's future, send him to Eton." No genetic engineering, he says, will produce such a guaranteed result.

The main lesson about science is failing to get through. Science is a method, not a body of established fact, a way of overturning certainties, not of proclaiming them. How many times in this past agonised year of BSE have you heard someone say "I wish they'd just tell us the truth"? As if "they", the scientists, were somehow like the Cabinet, a group who know something they are not telling, rather than disparate investigators around the world puzzled by a disease for which there is still no absolutely proven link to human beings. I once heard a Russian ask my husband, then Editor of *Nature*, the British science journal, "How much of what you print is wrong?"

"All of it," was the answer. That is, in time, today's knowledge will be supplanted.

That warning ought to be at the beginning of all so-called "science" programmes. I would improve them another way. Before plunging into a discussion of Fermat's Last Theorem or the beauty of the square of the number minus-one (see tonight's *Seven Wonders of the World* on BBC2), I would set on the screen "To understand this programme, what you should know is..." Then, at the end, before those endless lists of credits which thank every museum, photo archive and laboratory from here to Yucatan, I would

say "What this programme has shown is... I would not try to dress up health, diet, religion and gee-whiz gadgetry as 'science'. I would not try to teach the Second Law of Thermodynamics without explaining what the First Law is. And I would say that scientists who admit to uncertainty are the trustworthy ones. Above all, I would stop insulting science by treating it as a bitter pill that has to be sugared and forced down once a year."

I have always told American friends that Britain did not need presidential-style television debates because the party leaders face each other all the time in the House of Commons. Yet the American model does seem to have stirred an appetite in Britain for encounters more direct and less predictable than the ritualistic *Question Time*. Why not then go the whole American hog and ask the Prime Minister to give regular televised press conferences? Even if these did not yield great moments — such as the veteran reporter May Craig's question to John F. Kennedy: "Mr President, what are you doing for women?" — they would let fresh air into a closed system.



BRENDA MADDOX

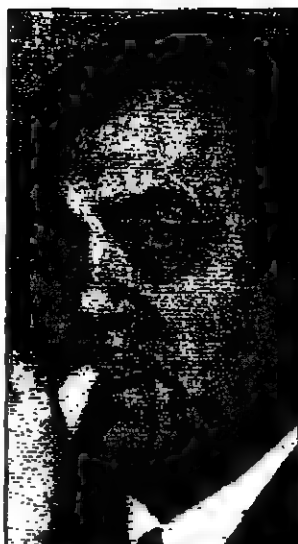
Eight MPs ready for any action

FIGHTING the general election may seem like small beer to eight intrepid MPs who agreed to experience the rigours of military life for a year as part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. Their exploits, which were recorded by a BBC2 documentary team, make taking to the hustings look like a doddle.

In the first two programmes in the series, *Politicians on Parade*, Lady Olga Maitland, the Conservative MP, is pitted against John Horne Robertson, a Labour colleague, on the Army firing range. Lady Olga apparently took with gusto the challenge of training with the Forces, but admitted she had cheated a little and had hidden an essential lipstick in one of the pockets of her bag.

Other game MPs who took part include the Tories Peter Luff and Sir Roger Moore, and the Labour members Andrew Miller and Paddy Tipping.

The final episode shows the Tory Piers Merchant and the Labour Gerry Steinberg experiencing their first Hawk jet



Mix-ups: John Prescott and Jane Moore of The Sun

flight. To prepare for the flight the two were put in a decompression chamber and suffered such bad memory loss that Mr Steinberg could not remember the name of the Prime Minister. It is tragic what some MPs will do to get on the telly.

False alarm

THERE was mayhem at the *Sunday Mirror* last Saturday night after reports that John Prescott, deputy leader of the Labour Party, had had a heart attack. An anonymous caller to the newsdesk reported that



Mr Prescott had been attending a function at Cave Castle, Humberston, when he collapsed and was taken to hospital strapped to a stretcher and clutching his chest.

A new front page was drawn up with a huge picture of Mr Prescott, looking solemn if not exactly dead, and a team of reporters leapt into action, telephoning hospitals, the emergency services and the Castle. Twenty minutes later, Mr Prescott rang the newsdesk and said: "Eh, what's all this about me 'avin' 'eart attack? Some bugger's been winding you up." Suspicion

has fallen on backs from rival papers.

● **GOOD news for pluggers.** Channel 5 has made record companies an offer it hopes they cannot refuse. Artists with new releases will be able to get free plugs not once but three times in one day. You provide the artist, the station provides the airtime, and we will get them on *Exclusive*, the five-nights-a-week entertainment news show presented by the Virgin Radio DJ Jonathan Coleman, plus on the late-night chat show presented by Jack Docherty and Five's Company, the afternoon magazine programme hosted by a posse of bright young things. How happy the audience will be with such saturation coverage, however, is another matter.

Dressy award

AT THE British Press Awards at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, Jane Moore, women's editor of *The Sun*, was approached by a slaving old boy who thrust a metal slab into her hands and said: "I'd like you to take this award for being the best-dressed person here."

The next morning, she realised what she had been given — *The Guardian's* award for team reporting. Over in Farringdon Road there was

much beard-stroking and pencil-chewing among *The Guardian's* diggers about the whereabouts of their trophy.

Ms Moore used it as a paperweight in her Wapping office until the joke wore thin and then she bled it back to Alan Rusbridger, Editor of *The Guardian*, with a note saying: "It's a long, tedious story, but hopefully you'll know who this belongs to."

Ms Moore received a note of thanks saying: "Not since the Jules Rimet trophy (World Cup) disappeared in 1966 has there been such a thing..."

Model writer

WHEN *GQ* Active, Condé Nast's new monthly handbook for outdoor types, is launched next month, it will be heavy on celebrity columnists with the model Yasmin Le Bon writing the motorcycling column and the footballer-vine buff Lee Chapman advising readers on drinks.

"Yasmin just loves driving and knows a lot about cars," trills a spokeswoman. "And Lee has a very extensive and valuable cellar. We know their capabilities."

● **Callers to The Sun**, the newspaper that backs Tony Blair, yesterday received a cheery greeting from staff: "Hello, the New Sun."

Attitude-altering slaps

BRITVIC Soft Drinks is hoping to repeat the runaway success of its 1991 campaign for Orange Tango by launching an anarchic commercial which exploits the countdown to the general election.

The ads feature caricatures of MPs being humiliated in a typical Orange Tango scenario. It will break on March 30 on Channel 5, which begins broadcasting on the same day. Channel No. 5 says it will be the first ad to air on the new station.

Britvic changed the face of soft drinks advertising with its Orange Man slapping people in the face. Sister brands Apple, Lemon and Blackcurrant Tango have used similarly off-the-wall work, with Blackcurrant Tango last week picking up the Best Commercial of the Year prize at the British Television Advertising Awards for its "St George" ad filmed on the cliffs of Dover.

ADVERTISING

THE Institute of Practitioners in Advertising has run a competition among communications students to create an advertising campaign that will stir apathetic 18 to 25-year-olds into voting.

Fewer than 45 per cent of young people bothered to vote in the last election — an issue that was tackled by a rather lacklustre £750,000 government campaign last year and was debated only last week in the House of Lords.

One winning entrant suggested hiring a youth icon such as Chris Evans to front a rousing campaign to push teenagers towards the polling station.

Perhaps it is not surprising that today's youth feels disenfranchised. One statistic unearthed by the stu-

dents was that 175 MPs are aged over 60 and only 25 under 40.

AGENCY brows will furrow at the news that Stella Artola is siphoning much of its advertising budget this summer into sponsorship and marketing.

The UK's premium lager is injecting £25 million into linking its name with film entertainment by means of, among numerous other projects, broadcast sponsorships of movies on both Channels 4 and 5 and national sponsorship of Virgin Radio's "Big Screen" film round-up show.

Any advertising activity will be virtually lost among all this, with plans only for a modest £750,000 cinema campaign through its agency Lowe Howard-Spink. Last year's total ad spend was a sturdier £4.2 million.

BELINDA ARCHER



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Efficiency through Performance

Channel 5 sets out its new order of the day

Celebrities and comedies to fill the unexploited time slots, reports Alexandra Frean

For the past few months, Dawn Airey, the director of programmes at Channel 5, has been keeping a diary chronicling the ups and downs of her efforts to get the nation's newest television station on air on March 30. Much to the dismay of her boyfriend, she sits down for three hours every Saturday, her only "day off", to write it.

If Airey goes the way of other media launch bosses and loses her job after a few months, she may well find that that diary comes in useful: many publishers would not doubt be interested in publishing *The Confessions of a Channel 5 Insider*.

Airey is too busy to give the idea of *laurel* more than a fleeting thought, however. "I spend all of my days in meetings solving problems. Problem-solving is what I am good at — that and making decisions quickly. Only at around 8pm can I start doing the rest of my work," she says.

Unlike Channel 4, launched 15 years ago proclaiming its minority remit with "Viewers Keep Out" signs all over it, Channel 5 is entering a market hungry for more choice, and expecting to have its mass-market tastes catered for. The margins for error are therefore quite small.

There is a big expectation from both the audience and the advertising community for us to perform well immediately. The audience won't tolerate anything that is of a lesser standard than they can see elsewhere," Airey summarises. She later admits, however, that at least one show in her schedule is a "real turkey".

Airey has already revealed Channel 5's programming hand quite extensively, placing emphasis on its user-friendly "stripped and stranded" approach to scheduling and its heavy reliance on American imports. Britain's first daily soap, *Family Affairs*, will run at 6.30pm; a celebrity gossip show at 7pm; nature and wildlife programmes at 7.30pm; the news at 8pm; leisure and lifestyle shows at 8.30pm and a nightly movie at 9pm. It is hardly earth-shattering stuff.

Where advertisers believe that Channel 5 seems most likely to make its presence felt is at the margins of its schedule, in the afternoon and late



Dawn Airey believes there is "an expectation to perform well immediately"

at night. These are areas where the existing terrestrial channels have a patchy record. Although the audiences are small at this time of day, in absolute terms, Channel 5 is well placed to do well in terms of audience share.

Airey describes her mid-afternoon programme, *Five's Company*, as a "high-energy gang show" presented by bright young things and offering chat, celebrity interviews and games and quizzes that the audience can play at home. "It will have the feel of a radio phone-in show on television," Airey says.

"All the existing broadcasters now recognise that there's a potentially large audience in the afternoon. I tried to cater for it when I was at Channel 4 with *Love in the Afternoon*, which was aimed at young housewives," she adds.

Rival broadcasters have already taken note and begun to schedule competitively against

Channel 5. "Channel 4 has just launched *Pet Rescue* and *Collectors' Lot* in the afternoons, and ITV has gone into the afternoon on a network, not a regional basis. That is a direct result of us. All of those shows are catering for an older audience, and yet half the audience available to view at that time is under 50," Airey says.

The other slot where advertisers believe that Airey has placed herself in a strong position is post-11pm, which has a distinctly "young urban male" feel. Airey hopes to achieve every day at this time what Channel 4 and BBC2 have already achieved on Friday nights. That is, to create a raft of youth-orientated comedy programmes aimed at those too young to be in bed but too satisfied with life to be out trying to change the world. At 11pm, Jack Docherty, the

Scottish stand-up comedian, has been given a chat show based on the American David Letterman format. It will include more celebrity guests, live music, scripted gags and topical chit-chat. The potential returns of such a show are high, particularly given the lack of any real competition in the evening chat show stakes. However, previous attempts to introduce Letterman-style programmes into the UK have failed miserably, even with presenters as experienced as Danny Baker and Jonathan Ross, so the Docherty strategy is a risky one.

The programme will be followed by several strands of risqué comedy programming, such as monologues by Jenny Eclair, a sketch show called *We Know Where You Live*, a celebrity quiz show *Bring Me the Head of LE* (Light Entertainment) and a medical quiz show, *Tibs and Fibs*. Although Airey won't say

so, the shows are clearly expected to push the boundaries of taste and decency to the limits and to take Channel 5 beyond the audience that actually watches it. With few light alternatives on the rival channels, the slot might just be one where the channel's audience share rises above the 5 per cent which Airey says she is aiming for overall.

Airey is also pinning her faith in Channel 5's nightly showbiz gossip programme, *Exclusive*, presented by the Virgin Radio DJ Jonathan Coleman. She intends to generate publicity for the show by feeding tidbits from it — (yet more) celebrity interviews, star scandals, Hollywood casting tips etc — to the tabloid papers. "I expect the programme to result in stories in the press every day."

She denies that the programme will run out of ideas. "Every day there are five terrestrial channels and 30-odd satellite channels. There are masses of stories concerning the stars," she says.

A joker in the pack for Airey may well prove to be the channel's Saturday evening prime-time light-entertainment show, *Night Fever*. Based on a format bought in from the French broadcaster TF1, it has all the madcap exuberance and intellectual paucity of Chris Evans's *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*. The programme, hosted by the Madness singer Suggs, pits celebrity teams against each other in a topical quiz, punctuated by karaoke singing contests, where the audience — including those at home — is expected to join in. It is daft, but it might just catch on.

Claiming that she always wants to offer an alternative to the other main channels, rather than present them with head-to-head competition, Airey says she has no intention of copying Channel 4 and BBC2 by running themed seasons. Instead, she is hoping to run evenings built around a major special event, such as the British Fashion Awards, one of the few glamour events still not given the full TV treatment.

Magnus Linklater on a Scottish circulation drive

Flying Scotsman carries the banner of devolution

AS commuters emerged from mainline stations in London on Monday morning they were greeted with an unusual sound. Instead of the roar of the traffic, they heard the shrill of the pipes. This was not, as you may imagine, the result of some uncompleted Jacobite business from 1745, it was a marketing exercise: the launch of *The Scotsman* as a properly distributed national newspaper in the South East. From this week, late editions of a publication which calls itself Scotland's National Newspaper will be flown down from Edinburgh to London, reaching the warehouses early enough for it to be on sale in newsagents alongside the London-based nationals.

Scottish news, opinion and up-to-date football results, will now be available on breakfast tables in Mornington Crescent as well as Morningside for the first time since the paper was founded in 1817.

It is the fulfilment of a dream long held. Hitherto *The Scotsman* has trundled down by train, arriving too late to reach any but a scattering of outlets. Its London sale, as a result, has rarely risen above 1,200, and frustrated expatriates have wearied of complaining about its absence. As Editor, I argued fruitlessly for a London print run, but came away defeated by the cost.

The paper's current owners, the Barclay Brothers, have deeper pockets. Initially the paper will be flown down at considerable expense. Later, the idea is to print in London. Plans for a reciprocal arrangement with the *Financial Times* have come to naught, but there are other lions in the fire.

The question now is: what will it achieve, and whose interests are being served? The immediate circulation objectives, as outlined by the paper's Editor, Martin Clarke, its Editor-in-Chief, Andrew Neil, and its Chief Executive, Bert Hardy, are modest: possibly 3,000 to 5,000, rising to 10,000 in a few years. On purely financial grounds that hardly counts as a worthwhile exercise. A similar investment in Glasgow, where the paper currently has only a wretched 6,000 circulation, would produce better results.

But London is where the paper's owners would like to make their mark. They want *The Scotsman* to be talked about as a national rather than a regional paper, they want it to feature on the *Today* programme, they want it to be noticed.

And so it should be. In the run-up to a general election and in its aftermath, Scottish devolution will be a key issue. To be able to read about it from a Scottish perspective in London should be invaluable for anyone who believes there is intelligent

life north of the Wash. On the other hand, the idea that *The Scotsman* might become a latter-day *Manchester Guardian*, fulfilling a need for a non-metropolitan voice in the South, is probably unrealistic.

At the point where *The Guardian* went "national" in 1961, it already had more than 40,000 readers in the South, with every evidence that this was only the tip of the iceberg. In today's television age, there is unlikely to be a huge demand for a paper from the north, outside a small circle of Scottish exiles, and institutions with an interest in Scottish markets and politics. My bet is that a gain of 5,000, modest as that may sound, is about the right target.

Of more concern to its existing readers is the paper's political stance. It has long been axiomatic that *The Scotsman* is the voice of devolution, a left-of-centre, decentralist, radical paper, representing the broad consensus of Scottish opinion, out of sympathy with successive Tory administrations, and committed to political reform. That may all be about to change.

Monday's edition announced that the Labour's plans for a Scottish parliament to be "gravely wounded" because of its failure to answer the West Lothian question. The idea that Scottish MPs should be allowed to debate English matters at Westminster while English MPs had no say over Scottish issues is, the paper argues, dishonest and unworkable. It therefore proposes an answer: Scottish members should have no vote when it comes to deciding English issues at Westminster. "Let the English control their own affairs," said its banner headline. And its leader made it clear that "nothing else will do".

Both Tories and Scottish nationalists have expressed their delight at this solution. But the notion that Tony Blair will agree to gag his Scottish backbenchers, to say nothing of his Scottish-dominated Cabinet, is absurd. It would mean, for instance, that Gordon Brown, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be unable to vote on a Bill concerning hospital provision in the South East or investment on Merseyside. It is, in short, every bit as unworkable as the issue the paper claims to address.

What the new line does raise, however, is another question altogether: could *The Scotsman* find itself lobbying for a "no" vote in Labour's referendum on a Scottish parliament, thus incurring the wrath of its readers? After all, it could hardly endorse a constitutional scheme for the future government of Scotland which, by its own admission, was fatally flawed.



Monday's edition: available in London

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THE TIMES
THE BBC
GOOD HOMES
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CHANGING TIMES

Blair is in tabloid heaven

It was an "historic" announcement, said *The Sun* as it declared its support yesterday for Tony Blair and New Labour — and the treatment of the story by other editors suggested that the claim was no exaggeration. It made the two main television news bulletins, *Newsnight* and the *Today* programme, and was reported on the front pages of *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and the *FT*.

With *The Mirror* also endorsing Blair — but now forced to declare itself as the paper for "Labour's TRUE supporters" — the electoral map of Britain's national newspapers has been decisively redrawn compared with 1992, when *The Sun* continually derided Neil Kinnock as a potential Prime Minister. If the *Daily Star* votes with its readers and eventually opts for Labour — and my bet is that it will — all three mass-market tabloids will be backing Blair.

The Sun has ten million readers a day. *The Mirror* has six and the *Daily Star* has two million. Even if the *Daily Mail* and *The Express* eventually endorse the Tories, Labour will be supported by three papers with a 3-1 majority of the 24 million tabloid readers. Yet does the support of *The Sun* really matter to Tony Blair? Do newspapers really help to win elections? Since Blair and Alastair Campbell, his press secretary, have fought so hard to win *The Sun's* endorsement, one answer is that it obviously does matter to them — and



they ought to know. Although it cannot be scientifically demonstrated, that is because journalists and politicians (especially) believe that what readers absorb from their papers day by day must have some effect, especially if it is relentlessly derogatory. It can, however, be demonstrated that *The Sun's* hostility to Kinnock in 1992 may well have influenced its readers to vote Conservative in several crucial marginal seats (but see Simon Jenkins on page 18). MORI polled voters throughout the election and found a sharp swing to the Tories in the last four days as *The Sun*, *Mail* and *Express* launched a front-page blitz against Kinnock.

Among Labour's main target seats were Slough and Hayes, where *The Sun* is read in nearly one in two homes. Among *Sun* readers, the swing to the Tories was 4 per cent. Assuming that they were influenced by their paper, the *Sun* effect delivered 1,104 votes in Slough, where the Tory majority was 514, and 732 in Hayes, where the Tory majority was 514.

John Major can, nevertheless, be cheered that more than three million readers of *The Sun* voted Labour at the last election despite its vitriolic campaign against Kinnock.



which suggests that what they read in their newspaper did not affect their vote. Another achievement by Blair has been to persuade the editors of newspapers that have traditionally been Labour's enemies that he leads a party that at least has a

"Nor will there be any 'Nightmare on Blair Street' in *The Sun*, which could — just conceivably — tip over to Blair on election day."

ANTI-TORY VOTE

	1992	1997
The Sun	50	63
Daily Mail	33	45
The Times	35	54
Daily Star	66	67
FT	33	34
The Independent	71	84

Source: MORI

claim to power. Even *The Daily Telegraph* said yesterday that Labour was no longer a disgrace or a joke. As the *Daily Mail* described the Tories as "jaded, fractured and rudderless," it added that Blair had rendered his party "electable with a vengeance". The result — with *The Sun* for Blair, the *Mail* impressed

by Labour, and the *Express* group controlled by a Labour peer — is going to be much fairer coverage for Blair in the dreaded "Tory tabloids" than in any of the elections since 1979. Both the *Daily Mail* (with Europe as the clincher) and *The Express* are, nevertheless, expected to back the Conservatives — and *The Daily Telegraph* effectively declared itself for the Conservatives yesterday.

Several editors are keeping their options open and there may yet be more good news for Blair. At the past two elections *The Independent* has refused to endorse any party — but the Editor, Andrew Marr, may well find a formula for saying how the paper would use a vote if it had one — and the betting must be that it won't be Tory. *The Times* is also keeping an open mind and Peter Stothard, the Editor, hinted ten days ago at "the possibility (only the possibility)" that the paper might back Labour. Will the *News of the World* follow *The Sun*? Will the *FT*, which surprised its readers in 1992 by backing Kinnock? Yesterday it described the battle as "close run" but if it voted for Kinnock, surely it must vote for Blair.

With six weeks to go, the tantalising prospect for Blair is that he could win the support of seven of the ten national daily newspapers — compared with only three that backed Kinnock in 1992, undoubtedly Labour's best showing in Fleet Street at least since 1945. That won't win the election for Blair but it won't do his prospects any harm.

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WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 1997

Sink in kitchen sales takes shine off Limelight shares

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LIMELIGHT, the kitchen company that came to the stock market in a controversial flotation last November, saw its shares plunge 25 per cent yesterday as it disclosed a dramatic fall in kitchen sales.

The shares, which had already fallen 17 per cent on Monday, ended the day down 35p at 107½p, against the flotation price of 175p.

Limelight said group sales in the first quarter of this year are down 11 per cent on a year earlier. The problems at Moben Kitchens were particularly bad, with sales down 32 per cent. In the same period last year, its sales rose 74 per cent.

Moben's weakness was partly offset by Kitchen Direct, whose sales rose 17 per cent. In 1995, Moben Kitchens and Kitchen Direct accounted for nearly 40 per cent

of group sales. Their combined total this year is down 24 per cent.

Limelight's kitchen was twice criticised by the BBC's *Watchdog* programme in December, and the company is taking legal action. Ashley Lewis, finance director, agreed that the programmes could have affected sales. "There could be a link," he said.

Sales of Dolphin fitted bathrooms, which share the same show-

rooms as Moben and which accounted for 18 per cent of sales in 1995, were down 11 per cent on last year. Sharps bedrooms and Portland conservatories are the only divisions trading satisfactorily.

The company ran into controversy last year over the role of Stephen Boler, former chairman and the company's creator. He resigned the chair before flotation and became a non-executive director. He sold the

bulk of his stake when the company came to the market, raising around £60 million to invest in an African safari park. He still holds 17 per cent. No new money was raised for Limelight in the float.

The company said yesterday that its forecast of operating profit before exceptional items of £16.5 million in the year to December 31 has been met. It will give more details with preliminary results on April 3.

Limelight may decide to bring its results announcement forward, but it is hampered by the absence of its chairman, Andrew Thomas, who is overseas. A spokesman noted that weakness in the fitted kitchen market had been highlighted by MFI. However, MFI recently reported like-for-like sales growth of more than 7 per cent.

Pennington, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FTSE 100	4386.8	(-18.5)
Yield	3.70%	
FTSE All share	2125.56	(-8.48)
Nikkei	10445.20	(+381.70)
Dow Jones	8940.00	(-15.48)
S&P Composite	782.70	(-3.01)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5¼%	(5¼%)
Long Bond	97½%	(97½%)
Yield	6.96%	(6.96%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6¼%	(6¼%)
Libor long gilt	110½%	(110½%)

STERLING

New York	1.5885	(1.5885)
London	1.5880	(1.5873)
DM	2.6987	(2.6921)
FF	6.5987	(6.5484)
Sfr	2.2882	(2.2147)
Yen	194.82	(193.32)
£ Index	95.7	(96.1)

US\$ & £ DOLLAR

London	1.5730	(1.5820)
FF	6.5485	(6.5700)
Sfr	1.4395	(1.4803)
Yen	122.47	(123.78)
£ Index	104.0	(104.5)

Tokyo close Yen 123.14

WORLD

London close	£348.85	(£348.85)
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* denotes midday trading price

BG faces writedown of £5bn on assets

By CARL MORTISHED

BG, which owns the British Gas pipeline network, could be facing a £5 billion writedown of its assets.

Expectations that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will adopt the Ofgas valuation of the Transco pipeline network mean that BG may be forced to consider whether there has been a permanent impairment of the economic value of Transco's assets.

Such a move could also have implications for the pipeline company's profits as accounting rules may not permit BG to cut its depreciation charge in line with the asset reduction.

The book value of the Transco assets is about £18 billion, recorded in BG's current cost accounts and filed at Companies House but Ofgas has adopted a regulatory asset value for Transco of about £12.5 billion. The difference is at the heart of the dispute between BG and its regulator.

City analysts have been probing BG's management to find out what the company will do to its balance sheet if the MMC adopts the Ofgas regulatory asset value. The company is believed to be in talks with Price Waterhouse, its auditors, over the dilemma.

The problem is compounded because BG works on current cost accounting rather than historic cost and, in a period of low inflation, there are few comparatives for dealing with the notion of permanent asset impairment. BG will have to decide whether the economic value of the assets has been impaired and whether the change is permanent.

Even more serious for BG is the possibility that the company's reporting of profits may be affected by an asset writedown. Price Waterhouse is believed to have advised BG that it may not be able to reduce its depreciation charge in line with the reduction in

asset value. Under current cost accounting, it is thought the depreciation charge must reflect the real cost of sustaining the asset base.

The cost of sustaining Transco's 2,500 kms of pipelines and other facilities are at the nub of the dispute between Ofgas and BG. By reducing the value of the asset base, the regulator has disallowed a large portion of the amount set aside by BG in its accounts for renewing the assets. In so doing, Ofgas arrives at a more regulated income for BG in its pricing formula.

The asset writedown alone is unlikely to disturb City analysts. Ordinarily, such a move would be followed by a profit upturn. Concerns about regulatory risk and windfall taxes have led the stock market to value BG at a big discount to even the Ofgas asset price of £12.5 billion.

The market value of BG is currently about £7.5 billion or almost £12 billion including its debts. Analysts attribute a value of some £4 billion to BG's upstream and international businesses, suggesting a market worth for Transco of only £7.5 billion, well adrift of the regulatory value.

However, suggestions that the depreciation charge against profits will not be reduced has serious implications for BG's dividend. The company has already indicated that it will distribute all of Transco's profits.

BG's management have been battling on several fronts in their effort to win concessions from the regulator and now from the MMC. Alongside the question of asset valuation is operational cost. The City is expecting BG to win some extra income from the MMC, in the range of £100 million to £150 million in the form of an allowance for higher operating costs.

Tempos, page 28



Peter Kindersley, chairman and chief executive of Dorling Kindersley, which aims to sell more of its books through its door-to-door network

Borrowing within target and City expectations

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

PUBLIC borrowing looks set to underperform the Government's Budget forecast this year after another month of healthy tax receipts.

The public sector borrowing requirement totalled £3.6 billion in February, according to the Office for National Statistics. This was lower than the City had been expecting and left cumulative borrowing in the first 11 months of the current financial year at £14.1 billion, against £22.2 billion at the same stage last year.

Even excluding privatisation proceeds, there has been a substantial improvement on last year. Ex privatisation, the cumulative PSBR in the 11 months of the financial year so far was £18.3 billion, compared with £24.5 billion in the previous year.

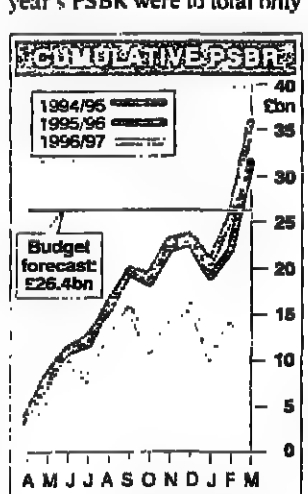
Most economists are now predicting a substantial undershoot of November's official prediction of a £26.4 billion PSBR for the full year, perhaps in the order of £2 billion to £3 billion.

Martin Brooks, of Goldman Sachs, said yesterday that the buoyancy of tax receipts also augurs well for a continuing fall in the PSBR

next year. He is predicting a PSBR in the 1997-98 financial year of £19 billion.

Central government cash receipts are up 7.4 per cent on the year, against the 5.7 per cent increase predicted in the Budget. All of the main revenue categories — income tax, corporation tax and VAT — are running above target.

However, Jonathan Loynes, of HSBC Markets, put yesterday's positive news into context, noting that, even if this year's PSBR were to total only



£23 billion, this would still be almost twice as large as was envisaged by the Government only two years ago. "Hence we continue to believe that the next Government would be well advised to tighten fiscal policy at some point," he said.

As well as improving the public finances, this could help to ease the upward pressure on sterling by minimising the need for further rises in interest rates.

The pound struggled again yesterday, largely because of strength in the market. Sterling's effective index against a basket of currencies dropped to 95.7 at the close, from 96.1 on Monday. By the close in London, it had lost 1.54 pence to DM2.6667.

Dorling Kindersley hit by profit warning

DORLING KINDERSLEY, the publisher, saw £36 million wiped from its market value yesterday as a profits warning sent its shares down 16 per cent (Fraser Nelson writes).

The company said its US business had been hit by book superstores cutting stocks by ordering only four weeks in advance, instead of 12.

The company aims to re-

cover by selling more titles through its own door-to-door network, but it said the switch will hit this year's profits.

Pre-tax profits in the six months to December 31 were £6.78 million (£6.23 million), and earnings per share were 5.9p (5.1p). An interim dividend of 1.5p is due on May 23.

The shares closed at a three-year low of 270p yesterday.

VAT concern

A National Audit Office (NAO) report today reveals weaknesses in value-added tax collection from large organisations that could be losing the Treasury millions each year and called for greater scrutiny. Page 26

Acquisitive

Charter Group, the conglomerate, said it was considering further acquisitions but declined to comment on market speculation it was sizing up Howden, the industrial farmer. Page 27; Tempos Page 28

Investors urged to sack poor board performers

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

SHAREHOLDERS should try to sack company bosses who do not merit their pay, directors' leaders say today.

The advice by the Institute of Directors that poorly performing company directors should be fired is the furthest that a leading business organisation has gone in putting forward proposals to reform boardroom pay.

The IoD, whose Director-General, Tim Melville-Ross, was a member of the Greenbury inquiry into directors' pay, today publishes a research paper on directors' remuneration, making clear that business still has a number of concerns about the issue.

The institute says it is for shareholders, and especially institutional shareholders, to bring pressure to bear on the remuneration committees of companies if they disagree with their recommendations. The IoD says: "Specifically, shareholders should oppose the re-election of directors who do not, in their

view, merit their remuneration." The institute also urges directors to offer themselves for re-election on a regular basis, perhaps every three years.

The research paper highlights the institute's concern about so-called "remuneration ratcheting" — pay being constantly moved up by means of the "macho culture of trying to ensure that a company's directors are in the upper quartile of pay". Attacking this as "indefensible behaviour", IoD leaders say it "brings discredit on business", and urge company remuneration committees to reject it.

Business organisations, including the IoD, have long urged companies to link pay directly to performance, including pay at boardroom level. While the institute is still advocating this, it says it is "disappointing" to note that most empirical evidence so far suggests there is only a "weak link" between pay and performance.

Barclays seeks approval for lucrative incentives

By ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BARCLAYS is to seek shareholder approval next month to give 60 "key" executives at BZW, its investment banking arm, lucrative new compensation packages to reward superior performance.

The radical US-style pay proposal in the Barclays annual report, published yesterday, relates to a BZW long-term incentive plan for 60 directors and executives of the investment banking division. If shareholders approve the plan at the annual meeting on April 22, the bank will pay generous bonuses linked to the performance of BZW and the Barclays share price.

To qualify for the incentive plan the BZW executives will have to wait three years to receive their payouts, which will be in Barclays shares, not cash.

Barclays, which last month unveiled a 13 per cent rise in annual pre-tax annual profits to £2.4 billion, said in its annual report that the total value of

18 directors' payments had almost doubled to £5.6 million from £3.2 million the previous year.

The largest sum was paid to Bill Harrison, chief executive of BZW, who joined last September and who earned a one-off £2.9 million as the price of luring him from Robert Fleming, Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclays, saw his total 1996 package rise to £820,000 from £685,000. Andrew Buxton, chairman, received a £24,000 pay rise to £506,000. Lord Lawson of Blaby received £31,000 in his role as non-executive director.

Mr Taylor has already stated that he has enough confidence in the bank's risk system for BZW — which contributed £204 million to profits last year, against £289 million previously — for the investment bank to take on more. His view is that "high risk is not necessarily bad risk".

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For the life you don't yet know

ALLIED DUNBAR

□ Societies do well by doing good □ A minor victory for United Biscuits □ SFA makes a late leap for the bandwagon

A virtue out of necessity

□ "ONE-OFF, unrepeatable offer! Regular customers, just get to your local branch of J Sainsbury or Asda this weekend and load your trolley up with cash! No catches, no hidden extras! This offer, not available at branches of Tesco or Sainsbury."

Too good to be true, alas. Instead we have had to rely on our local building societies to outdo each other in displays of generosity to members of the public prepared to stick with them. Windfalls from the Halifax and the Woolwich in return for the freedom to convert to public status are one thing. This week two of that dwindling band with no ambitions to become banks or financial supermarkets are also claiming to be handing back £100 million to customers.

But the sweeteners on offer from the Yorkshire on Monday and the Bradford & Bingley today are an inspired example of making a virtue out of a necessity. For example, these and Nationwide's £200 million per year "customer benefits initiative", about half of profits, can be seen as the cost of dividends societies would have had to pay to shareholders, if they had any as public companies. Instead the money is paid to their effective shareholders, that is, members, as higher interest to lenders and lower mortgage rates.

This allows non-converting

societies to operate with a built-in pricing advantage. The supermarkets have loyalty cards, effectively delayed discounts of 1 per cent or so. That £200 million, or £45 million in the case of the Yorkshire and whatever from the B&B, means a mutual can on average cut mortgage rates by 0.35 per cent and raise the amount paid to lenders by the same degree, and still match the retained profits pulled in by one of the new banks.

Given this in-built advantage, customers should gradually migrate from the converters offering worse rates to the remaining mutuals. They should grow their 20 per cent share of the mortgage market at the expense of those newly converted banks with stock market quotes to service.

Except that this would suggest that the good guys might finish first, and that can never happen, can it? So what can go wrong?

Customer inertia might prove so overpowering that the converters can continue to charge what they like. The latter's new shareholders might insist on action before market share is eroded, by cutting costs,

closing branches and behaving like any other bank, so allowing margins to begin to compete with the offers from the mutuals.

Many of the 60 or so mutuals expected to survive might grow so lazy and so inept from their protected status, like lions at the zoo whose hunting instincts have become atrophied, that they can no longer be bothered to seek out market share.

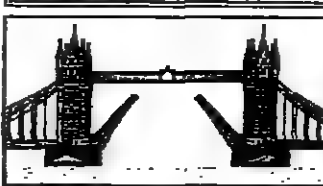
They might turn out to be the Co-op rather than John Lewis, and scant competition for Sainsbury. A few years of managed decline, and a quiet implosion — and all we are left with is the big supermarkets and banks.

P-p-pass off a Penguin

□ YES, yes, the big four supermarkets did change most of our lives for the better in the 1970s and 1980s. Now they control more than half of all food sales and are becoming as bad a bunch of over-mighty subjects as top trade unions were before. And look what happened to them.

Hard-pressed United Biscuits

PENNINGTON



has won a minor victory against Asda. Archie Norman, Asda's self-promoting boss, developed a brand-headed Puffin chocolate biscuit with strangely similar packaging to UB's Penguin. UB has won an injunction against the passing off, although nothing will happen pending appeal. UB's counsel noted drily: "There is no inherent connection between maritime birds and chocolate biscuits."

Asda said this was just a bit of fun and UB a humourless spoilsport. But nothing could be more deadly than the blatant use of monopoly power to override intellectual property rights. This lesson is one of the first that Western countries try to inculcate in former communist states.

Few manufacturers can afford to stand up in court to the big four, who can wipe their products from the shelves.

Coca-Cola challenged Sainsbury more than two years ago. The grocer finally changed its own-label cola can. The dispute spawned a code of conduct agreed between manufacturers and retailers requiring the latter to "avoid commercial plagiarism in packaging and trade dress".

This code appears to carry about as much authority as the unions' social compact with Lord Callaghan, which ended up with the winter of discontent. Kellogg's complained bitterly over Tesco's look-alike own-label cornflake packets.

Unilever, which spent millions developing and protecting the dairy named "I can't believe it's not butter", was not pleased by Asda's "You'd better believe it" spread. Grand Metropolitan, which spent much brainpower developing a new market with its Malibu coconut liqueur, nearly choked on Asda's Windward.

Eighteen years after the winter of discontent, Labour abhors strikes. But the Tory candidate

for Tunbridge Wells (not Tawman) seems to think property is there for the taking, or at least for the passing off.

One watchdog not having its day

□ WHEN a rogue trader runs amok, senior management should be brought to book by the relevant civil watchdog — if the latter is allowed to act unhindered. When the Securities and Futures Authority said it could not proceed against Peter Baring and Andrew Tuckey over management failures at Barings, there was almost universal condemnation and the so-called "Tuckey gap" was born.

So the SFA tried to address this by putting the burden of proof on senior managers to demonstrate why they should not be held responsible for the failings of juniors. The approach had already worked well for another regulator, Imro, in the Jardine Fleming case. At Morgan Grenfell even the threat of Imro action over Peter Young was enough for seven managers and super-

visors, and some very senior ones at that, to leave the firm.

But the decision by the Securities and Investments Board, yet another of this teeming band of regulators, to intervene in the debate looks suspiciously like a late bid to jump on the bandwagon. The SFA desperately needs to strengthen its rules, in particular to deal with the NatWest Markets incident. A delay for the chief watchdog to publish its mere thoughts on the matter, not even detailed rules, note, is helpful to nobody.

Our back pages

□ "WHAT is clear is that Mr Boler has become exceedingly wealthy while those who enter into deals with him tend to lose out," this column wrote on November 15, as Stephen Boler brought his Limelight Group to the stock market and pocketed £60 million. "As he is selling shares, do you want to be buying them?" And oh, how the company complained. Investors who paid 175p for shares now worth 107½p might ponder which of us was right. And NM Rothschild and Cazenove, respectively banker and broker, after one of the shortest gaps between prospectus and profits warning in corporate history might wonder how much longer they need decently stick around.

Charter silent as talk turns to Howden

By CARL MORTIMER

CHARTER GROUP, the conglomerate that owns Esab, the Swedish welding equipment business, is considering acquisitions but is refusing to comment on speculation that it is sizing up Howden, the industrial fanmaker.

Profits at Charter fell from £103 million to £47 million owing to the exceptional loss on the sale of its 65 per cent stake in Cape, the building products group — after the write-back of goodwill previously written off the balance sheet. Operating profit from continuing businesses rose from £89 million to £92 million, with an 8 per cent gain in profits from Charter's rail track equipment business.

Charter is seeking to add a third division and could spend between £250 million and £500 million on acquiring a new business. Speculation that a bidder is pursuing Howden, capitalised at almost £280 million, centred on Charter but the company would not be drawn. At the year end, after the Cape disposal, Charter had no debt and cash resources of £35 million.

Esab made profits of £77 million, up 4 per cent, and maintained its margin at 10.5 per cent despite the effect on exports of a strengthening Swedish currency. Demand in southern Europe and the UK was buoyant but sales were disappointing in Germany and France. Esab has closed its welding consumables factory in Germany. In September, the company announced a joint venture in Brazil between Esab and that country's leading welding consumables producer. Charter is raising the dividend 7 per cent, to 29.5p per share, after earnings of 70.9p, up 5 per cent.

Good sales of a new clip for fastening rails to sleepers helped the rail track equipment business to raise profits 8 per cent last year. The device reduces sleeper installation cost and is aimed at railroad customers seeking to reduce manning. The company makes only 3 per cent of its revenues in the UK but has a contract from Railtrack for seven new Stoneblowers.

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Britannic Assurance plans Peps

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

BRITANNIC Assurance, the door-to-door life and pensions office, plans to diversify into lending and unit trust Peps.

Brian Shaw, chief executive, said that offering Peps would increase Britannic's presence among wealthier savers, and developing a credit business would benefit the bulk of its existing 1.2 million policyholders, who needed another source of borrowing because many had no bank account.

Britannic had a setback in its move into home insurance, in which policyholders fell slightly, to 170,000, last year.

Overall, new regular premiums rose by 7.7 per cent, to £37.1 million, and new single premiums increased by 16.8 per cent, to £157 million.

Operating profit before tax rose 66 per cent, to £34.2 million, aided by a £23.2 million transfer after a settlement with the Government on "orphan assets". As part of this, the company is paying a 23p final dividend, making 28p.

CRT pays £23.8m for rival

By FRASER NELSON

CRT, the training and recruitment company, has become the lead player in computer staff contracting after buying IKPG, its rival, for £23.8 million. The deal was the first fruit of the £100 million cash injection that CRT gained last August by selling a controlling stake to a team of American businessmen.

Karl Chapman, chief executive, said: "We now have phenomenal ability to out-invest our competitors." With £75 million of the capital injection left over, he would be "disappointed" if CRT did not buy another company this year.

CRT is paying up to £16.9 million in cash, the balance in loan notes and paper. In the year to September 30, IKPG made underlying profits of £500,000 on sales of £45.1 million. It is expected to add about 40 per cent to CRT's business.

CRT's shares gained 3½p to 235½p yesterday.

Shake-up costs put Claremont into red

HIGHER than expected reorganisation costs meant Claremont Garments, a major clothing supplier to Marks & Spencer, dived £3 million into the red last year, the company revealed yesterday (Sarah Cunningham writes).

The cost of closing its Glasgow factory and laying off 600 staff were £7.6 million against expectations of £6 million. Added running costs during the reorganisation took a further £2 million off profits, according to Peter Wiegand,

chairman and chief executive. The result was a pre-tax loss in the year ended December 28 of £3.05 million compared with a profit of £12.9 million a year earlier.

Cost savings from the reorganisation will not begin to appear until the second half of the current year.

The company is maintaining its final dividend at 5.25p, payable on July 1, for a full-year 9.87p (9.65p).

The company's shares slid 17½p to 152½p.

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THE TIMES
CITY DIARY

Leslau chases screen dream

IT HAS been a busy week for Nick Leslau. Only 24 hours after announcing his decision to take Noddy to America, the chief executive of Trocadero yesterday staked his claim to open Europe's first Pepsi IMAX 3D cinema. Towering five storeys high and spanning the width of an Olympic swimming pool, the £6 million state-of-the-art cinema is to be housed in the Piccadilly leisure complex.

In the crossfire

ROGER BOOTLE came under fire at Bloomberg's bonfire to discuss the proposition: "New Labour, New Government". Sandwiched between William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Labour counterpart Alistair Darling, HSB's chief economist was clearly caught in the middle. A bearded Darling sniped at Bootle, who was acting as compere: "You're doing your Liberal role-playing, just like Paddy." Waldegrave retorted: "No, he's not at all like Paddy, he's very sensible." Ouch.

Smouha reward

WHO better to keep an eye on finances at The World Bank than Brian Smouha? As a reward for taking on two of the most sensational banking scandals in recent history — Banco Ambrosiano and BCCI — the Deloitte & Touche partner is to become lead auditor to the Bank. One major plus for Smouha, who recovered some 90 per cent of Ambrosiano's assets, is that he can resign as the Luxembourg liquidator to BCCI. He also gets to relocate to Washington. Virtue, as they say...



"£30 off our electric bill — how much will that be in windfall tax?"

Bookies buzzing

BOOKMAKERS flew into a spin after the news that The Sun is to back Blair. Ladbrokes moved the number of seats Labour will win from 364-370 to 372-378. Meanwhile, City Index has upgraded the number of seats predicted to be won by Labour from 365-371 to 373-379. Punters appear to have a different view, however. Since the opening of trade yesterday morning, they were busy buying the Tories (predicting more than 238 seats) and selling Labour (predicting less than 375 seats).

INSPIRED by Marjorie Scardino's mission statement on Monday, Dennis Stevenson has upped his stake in Pearson. The incoming chairman of the media and leisure group bought another 30,000 shares, adding to the first tranche he bought from former managing director Frank Barlow.

Viscount Lords it

TONY BLAIR's economics spokesman stepped into Lord Marsh's shoes yesterday as chairman of Lopex. Viscount Tom Chandos, a former corporate finance director at Kleinwort Benson and executive director of Bots & Company, will take over from Lord Marsh, the former Cabinet Minister in Harold Wilson's administration and chairman of British Rail, who now sits as a cross-bencher in the Lords.

MORAG PRESTON

Seek and you will find truth on jobs is hard to work out

Philip Bassett surveys the battle lines drawn in the dispute over how to count unemployment



Official figures have reported unprecedented numbers getting on their bikes

Widespread scepticism about the validity of unemployment statistics will erode much of the goodwill that government ministers might have expected to enjoy from two months of upbeat news about the jobs market during the election campaign.

While ministers are confident that new figures today will show a further decline in seasonally adjusted unemployment, business and the City reserve judgment because of a key change in benefits, which makes it much more difficult to gauge what is really going on in the labour market.

United Kingdom unemployment has been on a clear downward trend since reaching a high of 2.98 million in December 1992. But the Government's decision to change radically the principal state benefit available to people who have lost their jobs, scrapping the old unemployment benefit and replacing it with the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), blurs that trend.

The monthly unemployment figures are widely used as a "count of unemployment", which is one thing they are not. What they are is an administrative byproduct of the count made on a particular day each month of people who are receiving benefit because they are unemployed.

When governments decide to reform a state benefit, a change in figures often results. This is the root of the charge that unemployment figures have been altered at least 30 times since the Conservatives came to power in 1979. They have, but what has not been proven is the intent: the Government says it is to improve the benefits system, while its opponents say it is to reduce the dole queues artificially.

The change of JSA was so fundamental — essentially, shifting to means-tested benefit after six rather than 12 months, with the allowance itself tougher to obtain — that neither ministers nor Whitehall officials knew what effect it would have on the figures.

Though the monthly falls in unemployment had been accelerating as JSA started to come into effect for new claimants, no one was prepared for the sharp jump in the monthly decline when the full effects of JSA came into being last October.

After an average fall in the jobless of 19,300 over the previous six months, the drop in October was 45,600. November witnessed the biggest fall in unemployment for a quarter of a century, when the count fell by a massive 95,400. December's drop was a large 46,700, while last month's was

the second largest for 25 years, at 67,800. "We thought we might get one month's hit," acknowledges one senior Whitehall figure. "We didn't think we'd get this."

The sheer scale of the falls — the drop from October onwards is the same as the total fall for the previous year and a half combined — is making business and the City suspicious, let alone the Government's political opponents. More than a quarter of a million people have come off the count since October.

Sudhir Junankar, associate director for economic analysis at the Confederation of British Industry, says: "We have to take these figures with a very large pinch of salt."

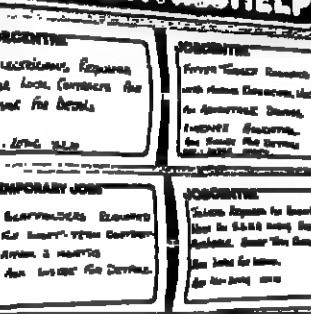
Bank of England officials agree. The Bank's last inflation report was sceptical, suggesting that even the not-yet fully compatible unemployment figures from the Government's quarterly Labour Force Survey implies that the labour market did not tighten as quickly in autumn 1996 as the fall in the administrative claimant count indicates, citing particularly a JSA effect. So what is it? What has been, and is being, the effect of the introduction of JSA on unemployment in Britain?

Inevitably, there are a number of answers, and these are complicated by an inter-departmental row in Whitehall that means the Government having, in effect, two answers. The main views are:

□ Statisticians: JSA has one key effect on the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the

ONS has suspended its estimate of the monthly trend in unemployment, depriving ministers of what might have been a potent weapon in the election campaign. Ministers would like their unemployment ball back — to kick it at the opposition.

ONS officials try to disentangle the impact of JSA into three elements. The first relates to changed office procedures — the time benefit office staff are taking to assess and process claims, given an unfamiliar benefit, and the conversion to a new computer system to process JSA claims. They estimate that the flow on to the jobless count has therefore been lower than would otherwise have been the case, depressing the count by up to 8,000, but they believe these effects will be temporary, as the system beds in. Secondly, they believe a shift to earlier means testing is having an effect on the stock of unemployment. Including a likely 5,000 reduction in today's figure, ONS officials believe that the total impact of this element has been to reduce the claimant count by about 15,000. Thirdly, they cite what are called "behavioural" effects, deter-



JSA has clearly affected the jobless figures

Government's statistics-collecting and producing arm: it makes it nervous. Battered by the political disputes over unemployment figures, the ONS has sought to determine the JSA effect, and where it cannot, to say so. Ministers have been irritated

ring people from making fraudulent claims, in the way the Government's Project Work "workfare" pilot scheme has done.

The Government yesterday strongly supported Project Work in evidence to the Commons' all-party Employment Select Committee. They may also include the impact of a reduction in postal signing for benefit, and further fraud measures, such as the Benefit Agency's Fraud Hotline, through which benefit cheats are stopped.

ONS officials cannot estimate the impact on the claimant count of these possible effects.

□ Ministers and other Whitehall officials. All this is a bit too cautious for some ministers, who fear they cannot claim the political prize of a rapid fall in unemployment. They insist that whatever the precise statistical impact of JSA, the trend in the fall in unemployment is now decisively different.

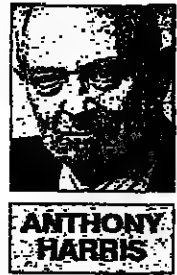
Instead of the 15,000 to 20,000 estimate put forward by the ONS, and suspended since last autumn, ministers in other departments and their officials believe unemployment is now dropping by up to 30,000 a month. Whitehall departments other than the ONS have been carrying out their own analysis of the effect of JSA since last month's unemployment drop, and their best estimate is that roughly about half the current drop is due to the new benefit, and half due to improvements in the labour market.

□ Independent employment analysts: Job pressure groups take a more sceptical view of the JSA effect. John Philpott, director of the Employment Policy Institute, says the figures "have obviously been affected by the revolution in the benefit regime following the introduction of the JSA".

The Unemployment Unit lobbying group calculates the cumulative effect of JSA so far is some 130,000, suggesting the 253,000 fall since October would only have been 116,000 without JSA, with the average monthly fall only really 29,500, against 64,000 in the official, published figures.

Paul Convery, Unemployment Unit director, says: "The Government should simply stop pretending that this measure represents the numbers of unemployed."

The full effect of JSA will not be known for a while. Indeed, job experts are still arguing about the claimant count effect of the Restart programme, introduced in 1996. But it is clear that the clouding of the figures will colour the pre-election debate over jobs.



ANTHONY HARRIS

EMU: danger of wishful thinking

This column is an election-free zone. It shouldn't be. EMU was until recently the issue facing the next Parliament. But now it is the great unmentionable, and not just among politicians. Until recently the bond markets "knew" that EMU would launch on time. Continental bond yields converged, and Sterling was an election play: Labour would take us in, to the benefit of gilts. But now, dither. Convergence plays are unwinding. The election here, Labour leads, but gilt yields are edging up. All bets are off.

Across the Channel, meanwhile, wishful thinking — not my words, but those of a Commission official, describing German economic projections designed to show that everything will be all right on the night. How true? Chancellor Kohl, dismissing all doubts, sounds more and more like John Major, who proclaimed Britain's "irrevocable" membership of the ERM — up to the day he revoked it. Anyway, the idea of the Fat Controller missing his own start is appealing in itself, so lips are being locked.

Wishful again. An optimistic forecast can still be right. German near-term growth prospects depend almost entirely on how quickly that economy responds to devaluation; and since Germany has not devalued within living memory (unless you count the dollar bubble in the early 1980s), that is a matter of pure guesswork. Germany could still qualify, at least on the borrowing test. And does strict compliance with the numbers really matter? The Chancellor may like to proclaim that "three means three"; but he is talking about keeping Italy out of EMU, not letting Germany in. The Treaty is fuzziest.

It says that a deficit over 3 per cent of GDP will qualify if it is "exceptional and temporary". The 60 per cent limit on the government debt/GDP ratio, which Germany will almost certainly fail to meet, looks less elastic; but the sanction is

not exclusion, but a Commission report on the medium-term outlook. Note that it may also report on those who do qualify "if it is of the opinion that there is a risk of an excessive deficit" — a clear threat to the Club Med countries, which have stormed up the field from nowhere. In theory, this clause could also threaten the likes of France, which qualify through fiscal fudge.

But is this likely? The Treaty sets numbers as targets, but makes the Commission jury; and one cannot imagine the Commission showing a red card to the biggest core members of the EC. The only real political threat to the launch is the qualified majority vote that will give the final verdict. If the Club Med countries are barred, they may have to be bought off — at least with promises. These will be forthcoming. A more distant threat is the emerging opposition to the whole Maastricht project in countries that were once solid supporters. Opponents include, potentially, the German Social Democrats, and a new French party.

But can they really gather enough support to block the launch? Wishful thinking may say yes, but reason says no. EMU still looks an odds-on bet to start on time, though with a skeleton crew for its trials. And what about those trials? Conventional wisdom and the market say that with a hand-picked crew, nothing can go wrong. Charles Goodhart, financial markets guru at the LSE and former voice of reality at the Bank of England, begs to differ. Trouble, he says, could emerge not slowly, through regional decline, but suddenly, and in the bond markets. National debts, he says in the current issue of *Prospect*, will no longer be the sovereign debt the market knows — bonds subject to exchange-rate risk, but backed by the power to print money. They will carry solvency risk, like Liverpool Dock and Harbour, or New York City. Or, say, Belgium?

Making a case for letting sleeping watchdogs lie

Christine Buckley on how MPs viewed the regulatory industry



Spottiswoode: endorsement



Littlechild: bolstered

tor, could prove a welcome add-on to RPI-X.

A number of companies have opted to offer consumer rebates and voluntary price-cutting. But the problem with voluntary arrangements is that they are ad hoc and at the company's discretion. The water regulator has already experienced intransigence from one company.

An alternative way of curbing profits is to set a rate of return that the company is permitted to achieve on its assets. This form of regulation operates in the United States and is less incentive-oriented than RPI-X, which works to encourage cost savings and efficiencies within companies. But the formula also stands accused of encouraging unnecessary capital investment to secure greater returns.

RPI-X, meanwhile, is criticised for its opposite effect of encouraging short-termism among businesses anxious to deliver immediate savings and productivity increases at the expense of longer-term investment planning.

One area where the select committee has shown more teeth in its recommendations involves the power that regulators have over their industries. It urges an inquiry to discover whether Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, needs more powers to get to grips with the much-criticised electricity pool. The pool — the marketplace for power — and the issue of competition in power-generation have long been bone of contention among large users and region-

al electricity companies. After the last select committee report into energy regulation recommended scrutiny of generators' margins and costs, Professor Littlechild moved ahead with his divestment plans. He may well respond again to this fresh bolstering of the concerns over the extent of competition in generation.

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas regulator, will also be thankful for what amounts to a ringing endorsement of her battles to make public more information about Transco, British Gas's pipeline network. The committee recommends that information regarding a natural monopoly should be assumed to be non-confidential unless otherwise stipulated. On this point early legislation is urged as an acknowledgment of the conflict between regulator and regulated over information.

The committee has further recommended that the Government should keep a check on regulators' budgets to ensure they have something with which to combat the financial might of the regulated businesses.

When the Labour Party has stopped waving the report as backing for its windfall tax, its own trade and industry team must decide whether to endorse the report's tinkering approach or go for a more radical reform of regulation. If Labour forms the next government the renewal date for all the utilities' price controls will come up in 2000, two years ahead of another general election. If it does nothing to the regulatory process it must hope that, by then, controversy and condemnation have indeed been overtaken by the level of satisfaction that the trade and industry select committee anticipates.

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	£m	
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Profit before tax	45.6	53.1
Earnings per share	15.2p	20.0p
Dividends per share	18.9p*	18.9p*

* Final dividend to be paid as a Foreign Income Dividend (FID)

Copies of the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 28th December 1996, from which the above is an extract, are available from 4th April from the Secretary, Delta plc, 1 Kingsway, London WC2B 6GF. Telephone 0171-836 3535.

CABLES

Cowie bus takeover endorsed

The Government has backed the Monopolies and Mergers Commission conclusion that the £300 million takeover by transport group Cowie of its rival British Bus was not against the public interest. John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, agreed with the MMC that, nationally, the takeover could mean more competition, not less. He said London's bus market was regulated enough to guarantee competition, even though Cowie is the capital's biggest private operator. Cowie now controls more than a quarter of all London's buses.

Pathfinder aim

Pathfinder Properties, which owns and rents out housing in London, plans to join the Alternative Investment Market next week. Andrew de Candole, chairman, has put up £750,000 to buy out shareholders who hold stakes through the Business Enterprise Scheme. The company, expected to be capitalised at £1.4 million, will concentrate on home conversions from commercial property. It has already bought a former telephone exchange in Wimbledon, south London, which it plans to turn into 104 apartments.

BT link-up

British Telecommunications will increase its operations in Japan through a joint venture next month with Marubeni Corporation, the Japanese telecommunications business, that will aim to increase the business by offering direct access to global services. BT will have a 51 per cent stake, Marubeni 31 per cent and minority shareholders the rest.

Secure future

Secure Trust, the financial services company, is paying a final dividend of 14p, making the total 20p (18p). Secure's pre-tax profits for 1996 edged higher to £9.4 million. Income from its bill-paying service for consumers rose 10 per cent.



Ian Black, managing director of Wilson Connolly, left, David Lawther, finance director, centre, and Lynn Wilson, chairman

Profits up at Wilson Connolly

By ADAM JONES

PRE-TAX profit at Wilson Connolly Holdings, the housebuilder, rose 17 per cent to £26.4 million in 1996, on the back of the patchy property revival.

Turnover rose to £300 million (£245 million), driven by buoyancy in southern England. In total, 4,154 new homes were sold in 1996, with an increased average selling price of £61,580 (£59,600). Three- or four-bedroom houses accounted for 66 per cent of sales.

But the performance in Scotland — where difficulty in obtaining planning permission hindered growth — and northern England was disappointing, with prices for new homes remaining flat.

A final dividend of 3.44p (3.18p), payable on June 2, and a special dividend of 5p, payable on April 4, are proposed.

Sterling threatens Glynwed's 'first real growth this decade'

By OLIVER AUGUST

GLYNWED International, the engineering group, is benefiting from the strength of the housing market, which has offset the cost of the rise in sterling. The growing number of people moving into new homes has boosted sales of consumer durables.

Volume growth at Glynwed's consumer durables unit reached 15 per cent last

year after declining for seven years. A spokesman said: "This is the first real growth we have seen this decade."

Glynwed is market leader in the leisure cooker market and has seen sales of gas and electric cookers increase across the board. The spokesman said: "Once house sales get under way this pulls through in the consumer durables sector."

But the group gave warning

that export growth was under threat from exchange rate shifts, with the strong pound likely to have a significant effect not only on its operations, but on the UK economy as a whole.

Glynwed is highly exposed to European currency shifts. Of its £150 million worth of exports, £90 million is destined for Europe. It maintains, however, that the rising pound would not necessarily

help its European competitors. A spokesman said the competitors may prefer to raise their prices in order to restore margins squeezed after sterling's free fall after Black Wednesday in 1992.

Nevertheless, Glynwed expects the negative impact of the rising pound on its results to grow in 1997 despite being hedged in the currency markets. In the calendar year 1996, the group's pre-tax prof-

its before exceptional increased slightly from £84.9 million to £86.4 million. But profits were cut back to £70 million by one-off provisions of £16.3 million. Earnings per share fell to 18p from 25.7p. The dividend was maintained at 12.75p, with the final payment of 8.35p to be made on June 6.

The exceptional charges mainly resulted from provisions totalling £12.5 million for the disposal of Wednesbury Tube, its copper business. The sale was finalised on February 28 and further disposals of non-core units are expected. The group has not made any further provisions so far. At the same time it said it was also looking for "strategic buys".

A further factor limiting profitability during 1996 was the slump in metal prices. Between mid-1995 and mid-1996, prices fell by almost 40 per cent. The spokesman said: "This fall hurt profits in our metals distribution division. However, the division is still comfortably profitable."

The pipe systems division incurred one-off costs of £6 million for the integration of Victaulic and the development and launch of a new international product range.

Graseby seeks healthcare growth

By PAUL DURMAN

GRASEBY, the electronic instruments group increasingly concentrating on drug infusion, is in the market for more healthcare acquisitions.

The company expects to clear its £5.4 million of borrowings through the sale of two small businesses that make infra-red sensors and industrial controls. Paul Lester, Graseby chief executive, is

likely to expand the medical division's range of pumps and bags, but would also be interested in closely related areas.

Graseby reported annual pre-tax profits up from £6 million to £10.5 million, its best results for five years. The medical division, strengthened by the 3MIT business bought last July, contributed higher profits of £5 million

(£4.2 million) despite weak demand from the National Health Service.

The technology division, which includes Graseby's chemical weapons monitor, increased profits to £3.2 million (£1.4 million). Having recently won £60 million of contracts from the US and Swiss governments, Mr Lester said the group is now bidding

for a \$400 million contract from the US defence department. The contract, to replace existing monitors with smaller ones, will require Graseby to find a US partner.

The product monitoring division, which made £2.2 million (£3.2 million), is expected to grow slowly but will benefit from cost-cutting. The environmental arm, which saw profits recover to £2.2 million (£1.2 million), may receive a boost from new US legislation. A final dividend of 3.9p, due on May 27, will maintain the total at 6.6p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Cantab and Glaxo link in vaccine deal

CANTAB PHARMACEUTICALS, the biotechnology company, will receive £11 million from Glaxo Wellcome as part of a deal that gives the drugs group exclusive rights to a potential vaccine against genital herpes. Glaxo Wellcome will bear the development costs and will have exclusive worldwide marketing rights over Cantab's DISC HSV vaccine for herpes simplex virus infections.

As well as a £5 million licence fee, Glaxo Wellcome is paying £6 million for a 4 per cent stake in Cantab — equivalent to a price of 965p a share. Jurek Sikorski, Cantab's chief executive, said this was an endorsement of the company's technology. The HSV vaccine is unlikely to be ready for market until 2002. Cantab will receive royalties on sales, in addition to further milestone payments. Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo Wellcome's chief executive, said he was "very excited" about DISC HSV, which combines "important safety features with the prospect of considerable therapeutic potency".

World Telecom value set

PETER GELARDY, founder of Jazz FM, will become a paper millionaire next week when World Telecom, a phonocard producer, joins the Alternative Investment Market valued at £32 million. Mr Gelardy will have a £3.87 million stake in World Telecom, the company he founded three years ago with Peter Neilson, marketing director, who will have a stake worth £3.68 million. The company's phonocards for executives travelling overseas will be targeted at a broader market. The shares will be priced at 150p apiece.

NLC issues warning

DEEPENING losses at a Lloyd's underwriting syndicate caused New London Capital, the corporate investment vehicle, to issue a profit warning yesterday. It told investors that consolidated underwriting profits are likely to be in line with or below the Lloyd's market average after Syndicate 657 announced a loss of 41 per cent of capacity. New London, which in December predicted that it would beat the average, had a 7.1 per cent exposure to the syndicate in 1996, the underwriting year that forms the basis for its 1996-97 results.

Lopex names new chief

SHARES of Lopex hit a three-year high as the marketing group returned record underlying profits and named Viscount Chandos as its new chairman. Operating profits rose to £3.4 million (£2.5 million) last year. But a £3.8 million provision for future losses on property rentals turned this into a loss of 2.1p a share. The dividend rises 50 per cent to 0.75p, with a final 0.45p due May 23. Viscount Chandos, who resigned from Chrysalis last October, takes over in May. The shares rose 2p to 28p.

Paterson edges ahead

PATERSON ZOCHONIS, the international trading company behind the Imperial Leather soap brand, reported pre-tax profits of £13.97 million for the six months to November 30, up from £13.19 million previously. Earnings improved to 19.25p a share from 16.81p. The interim dividend is lifted to 5.5p (2.65p), reflecting the intention to redress the balance between interim and final payments. The company expects full-year pre-tax profits similar to the previous year's £29.17 million.

Manders holds dividend

MANDERS, the supplier of printing inks and coatings, is holding the total dividend at 11.5p a share for 1996, after reporting a fall in pre-tax profits from £11.6 million to £5.5 million. The company was affected by fierce price-cutting in the coatings and printing inks markets. Results were also adversely affected by a £1.57 million restructuring charge. Adjusted earnings fell to 10.3p a share, from 21.9p. The final dividend is unchanged at 8.4p.

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Swire Pacific

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P D A Sutch

Chairman, Swire Pacific Limited
Hong Kong, 14th March 1997

HIGHLIGHTS

Profit attributable to shareholders	US\$981M	+19%
Investment property portfolio	US\$11,595M	+41%
Net assets per share	US\$8.15	+41%
Earnings per share	US\$61.9	+19%
Dividends per share	US\$22.7	+11%

Notes:

- Amounts per share refer to 'A' shares. Entitlements of 'B' shareholders are in proportion 1 to 5 compared with those of 'A' shareholders.
- All the above figures have been translated from Hong Kong dollars into United States dollars at an exchange rate of US\$1 = HK\$7.80.
- Dividends are declared in Hong Kong dollars.

Earlier losses halved

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES							
100	100	100	100	100	0	0	100
101	101	101	101	101	0	0	101
102	102	102	102	102	0	0	102
103	103	103	103	103	0	0	103
104	104	104	104	104	0	0	104
105	105	105	105	105	0	0	105
106	106	106	106	106	0	0	106
107	107	107	107	107	0	0	107
108	108	108	108	108	0	0	108
109	109	109	109	109	0	0	109
110	110	110	110	110	0	0	110
111	111	111	111	111	0	0	111
112	112	112	112	112	0	0	112
113	113	113	113	113	0	0	113
114	114	114	114	114	0	0	114
115	115	115	115	115	0	0	115
116	116	116	116	116	0	0	116
117	117	117	117	117	0	0	117
118	118	118	118	118	0	0	118
119	119	119	119	119	0	0	119
120	120	120	120	120	0	0	120

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
BANKS							
121	121	121	121	121	0	0	121
122	122	122	122	122	0	0	122
123	123	123	123	123	0	0	123
124	124	124	124	124	0	0	124
125	125	125	125	125	0	0	125
126	126	126	126	126	0	0	126
127	127	127	127	127	0	0	127
128	128	128	128	128	0	0	128
129	129	129	129	129	0	0	129
130	130	130	130	130	0	0	130
131	131	131	131	131	0	0	131
132	132	132	132	132	0	0	132
133	133	133	133	133	0	0	133
134	134	134	134	134	0	0	134
135	135	135	135	135	0	0	135
136	136	136	136	136	0	0	136
137	137	137	137	137	0	0	137
138	138	138	138	138	0	0	138
139	139	139	139	139	0	0	139
140	140	140	140	140	0	0	140

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
BREWERS, PUBS & REST							
141	141	141	141	141	0	0	141
142	142	142	142	142	0	0	142
143	143	143	143	143	0	0	143
144	144	144	144	144	0	0	144
145	145	145	145	145	0	0	145
146	146	146	146	146	0	0	146
147	147	147	147	147	0	0	147
148	148	148	148	148	0	0	148
149	149	149	149	149	0	0	149
150	150	150	150	150	0	0	150
151	151	151	151	151	0	0	151
152	152	152	152	152	0	0	152
153	153	153	153	153	0	0	153
154	154	154	154	154	0	0	154
155	155	155	155	155	0	0	155
156	156	156	156	156	0	0	156
157	157	157	157	157	0	0	157
158	158	158	158	158	0	0	158
159	159	159	159	159	0	0	159
160	160	160	160	160	0	0	160

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS							
161	161	161	161	161	0	0	161
162	162	162	162	162	0	0	162
163	163	163	163	163	0	0	163
164	164	164	164	164	0	0	164
165	165	165	165	165	0	0	165
166	166	166	166	166	0	0	166
167	167	167	167	167	0	0	167
168	168	168	168	168	0	0	168
169	169	169	169	169	0	0	169
170	170	170	170	170	0	0	170
171	171	171	171	171	0	0	171
172	172	172	172	172	0	0	172
173	173	173	173	173	0	0	173
174	174	174	174	174	0	0	174
175	175	175	175	175	0	0	175
176	176	176	176	176	0	0	176
177	177	177	177	177	0	0	177
178	178	178	178	178	0	0	178
179	179	179	179	179	0	0	179
180	180	180	180	180	0	0	180

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
ELECTRICITY							
181	181	181	181	181	0	0	181
182	182	182	182	182	0	0	182
183	183	183	183	183	0	0	183
184	184	184	184	184	0	0	184
185	185	185	185	185	0	0	185
186	186	186	186	186	0	0	186
187	187	187	187	187	0	0	187
188	188	188	188	188	0	0	188
189	189	189	189	189	0	0	189
190	190	190	190	190	0	0	190
191	191	191	191	191	0	0	191
192	192	192	192	192	0	0	192
193	193	193	193	193	0	0	193
194	194	194	194	194	0	0	194
195	195	195	195	195	0	0	195
196	196	196	196	196	0	0	196
197	197	197	197	197	0	0	197
198	198	198	198	198	0	0	198
199	199	199	199	199	0	0	199
200	200	200	200	200	0	0	200

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
ELECTRONIC & ELECT							
201	201	201	201	201	0	0	201
202	202	202	202	202	0	0	202
203	203	203	203	203	0	0	203
204	204	204	204	204	0	0	204
205	205	205	205	205	0	0	205
206	206	206	206	206	0	0	206
207	207	207	207	207	0	0	207
208	208	208	208	208	0	0	208
209	209	209	209	209	0	0	209
210	210	210	210	210	0	0	210
211	211	211	211	211	0	0	211
212	212	212	212	212	0	0	212
213	213	213	213	213	0	0	213
214	214	214	214	214	0	0	214
215	215	215	215	215	0	0	215
216	216	216	216	216	0	0	216
217	217	217	217	217	0	0	217
218	218	218	218	218	0	0	218
219	219	219	219	219	0	0	219
220	220	220	220	220	0	0	220

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
BUILDING & CONSTRUCT							
221	221	221	221	221	0	0	221
222	222	222	222	222	0	0	222
223	223	223	223	223	0	0	223
224	224	224	224	224	0	0	224
225	225	225	225	225	0	0	225
226	226	226	226	226	0	0	226
227	227	227	227	227	0	0	227
228	228	228	228	228	0	0	228
229	229	229	229	229	0	0	229
230	230	230	230	230	0	0	230
231	231	231	231	231	0	0	231
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233	233	233	233	233	0	0	233
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236	236	236	236	236	0	0	236
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238	238	238	238	238	0	0	238
239	239	239	239	239	0	0	239
240	240	240	240	240	0	0	240

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
BUILDING MATERIALS							
241	241	241	241	241	0	0	241
242	242	242	242	242	0	0	242
243	243	243	243	243	0	0	243
244	244	244	244	244	0	0	244
245	245	245	245	245	0	0	245
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248	248	248	248	248	0	0	248
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250	250	250	250	250	0	0	250
251	251	251	251	251	0	0	251
252	252	252	252	252	0	0	252
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254	254	254	254	254	0	0	254
255	255	255	255	255	0	0	255
256	256	256	256	256	0	0	256
257	257	257	257	257	0	0	257
258	258	258	258	258	0	0	258
259	259	259	259	259	0	0	259
260	260	260	260	260	0	0	260

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg	%	P/E
CHEMICALS							
109	109	109	109	109	0	0	109
110	110	110	110	110	0	0	110
111	111	111	111	111	0	0	111
112	112	112	112	112	0	0	112
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114	114	114	114	114	0	0	114
115	115	115	115	115	0	0	115
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129	129	129	129	129	0	0	129
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296	296	296	296	296	0	0	296
297	297	297	297	297	0	0	297
298	298	298	298	298	0	0	298
299	299	299	299	299	0	0	299
300	300	300	300	300	0	0	300

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY MARCH 19 1997

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CREME DE LA CREME

Marketing and Sales Secretary to £16,000 (City)

This is a great opening to join a growing company supporting two young managers. Your day will be varied and busy, producing presentations and reports, arranging travel and accommodation. This organisation will give masses of opportunity to someone who has the ability to be proactive and use their own initiative. Skills: 50wpm/ Windows/ Excel Age: 20-30. Please call Sam Garner on 0171 390 7000

Crone Corkill Recruitment Consultants

Graduate Opportunity c.£17,000 plus bonus

This is a one-off opportunity for a recent graduate with secretarial skills to gain experience with a small but leading City fund management firm. Based in fantastic offices, you will be initially based on reception gaining front line exposure to all clients and situations and then developing your role taking on more involved duties and progressing within the company depending on available opportunities. Age: 21-26. Skills: 45wpm typing/strong IT skills. Please call Claire Ashley on 0171 390 7000.

Crone Corkill Recruitment Consultants

Moving On Up £18-20K + Fab Bens West End

Large international firm of management consultants seek senior secretarial assistants to join their dynamic team. You will have good knowledge of Windows, combined with a strong sense of team responsibility as well as a real eye for detail and boundless enthusiasm. The job content is interesting and diverse with the opportunity to become totally involved. A minimum of 5 GCSE's at C grade and the attitude to succeed are the key. Please contact Susanna Hargreaves on 0171 434 4512.

Crone Corkill Recruitment Consultants

MEDIA RELATIONS Accounts Assistant £20,000 WC2

'Down-to-earth' - unusual for a successful PR company. If you are too and you enjoy frequent contact with 'blue chip' clients, you're highly organised and well-educated, this is an excellent career move. It's not all glamour, of course - there's still typing, organising travel, diaries etc. Age to late 20's.

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS £18-25 neg SW1

Our client is an international management consultancy, a market leader with the highest standards. They need 3 exceptional admin assistants - committed, computer literate team players with flexible, 'can-do' attitudes and decently accurate 60wpm. How do you measure up?

PLEASE CALL 0171 373 7778 JIGSAW



8 Staple Inn London WC1V 7QH
Tel: 0171 404 4653 Fax: 0171 831 7581

RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT £15,000-£18,000 pa

We are an established independent Recruitment Consultancy with a growing list of first-rate clients. The recruitment team is highly experienced and results-oriented. The atmosphere is informal yet business-like and we seek an additional Consultant with similar qualities.

You should be an experienced Consultant with a proven track record and enjoy the buzz of handling a professional team of temps. (Initially maternity cover). Benefits include profit share, PPP, a lovely location and a dynamic, happy environment. Please contact Hilary Watts in confidence to discuss.

WORLD OF INTERIORS £12-£15,000

1st or 2nd job? The opportunity has arisen for someone with an interest in the World of Interiors to work as Secretary/Receptionist within this very prestigious and well-connected company based in SW3. Using your finely tuned office skills you will be meeting Interior Designers and their Clients, putting together quotes and correspondence, arranging flowers, curtains - anything! An excellent training ground to learn about small but expanding business. - £140 + Windows. Age 20-25.

TRUE GRADUATE ASSISTANT £18,000

UK President of High-Growth International Media Corporation needs highly motivated Assistant/Project Co-ordinator intent on a career in Media. He offers 100% involvement - you could be attending meetings, researching into major projects, policy formatting - as part of a much wider, global Organisation. An interest in the Far East/Asia useful, must have keyboard skills and be computer literate. Age 22-25.

CHELSEA COMMUTING! £18, - £20,000

End all that hassle with crowds, tubes, buses etc, and come to work in the fresh leafy streets of Chelsea and Kensington amongst their attractive houses and in their calm village atmosphere. This prestigious, privately owned Estate Agency in SW3 need a PA to organise their highly successful Head of Sales. Must have humour and self-confidence essential! Aged 25-35. -£60. No Audio!

EXECUTIVE SELECTION! £23,000 + Bonus

A fabulous opportunity has arisen for a PA/Administrator with at least 2 years experience to join this Int'l, Blue-Chip firm of Executive Selection Consultants. Based in W1 you will work alongside 2 successful and likeable Consultants - manage their diaries, coordinate meetings, put together reports, correspondence, liaise in depth with clients and candidates - anticipate their needs and as a result get totally involved. -£60, Windows + Powerpoint. Age 23-28. Low secretarial content

TEMPORARIES!

Help! Due to expansion we urgently need experienced Receptionists, Secretaries, PA's who would enjoy temping for our clients in the West End, Chelsea and the City. Without exception our Temporary Bookings are treated like Permanent Jobs - we get you work, fast work! where you feel you fit in, coupled with competitive rates of pay. For more information please ring Diana Anderson.

ANDERSON HOARE 0171 824 8821

Enjoy temping! Want to earn money, find the right permanent job or increase your career prospects?

With Crone Corkill and AIR MILES it's easy!

Our friendly, helpful team of Consultants has lots of opportunities for secretaries with 60+ wpm typing and good windows packages. We'll give you the best hourly rates AND we're the only agency to give all our temps AIR MILES awards. Make your assets take you further - call our Temp Desk NOW and get your career off to a flying start.

Together we'll get you there!

Middlington 0171-390 7000

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Crone Corkill Temporary Recruitment

ARE YOU A CREATIVE CREATURE?

As media secretarial specialists we can offer you a world of exciting opportunities



- from the Arts, publishing, broadcasting, marketing, PR and music



If you are a good PA or Secretary with a professional attitude, we'll find you a job you'll be sad to leave!

Salary range £10,000 - £25,000+

TEL: 0171 498 8566
FAX: 0171 493 6320

GROSVENOR BUREAU

EXECUTIVE RECEPTIONIST

to £21,000 + Banking Bens

Excellent opportunity for an extremely polished Receptionist to work within this Banking Organisation. The role incorporates scheduling appointments, so keyboard skills a must. The ideal candidate will be aged 25-40 and have had experience as a Receptionist working for a banking/financial organisation.

Please contact Melinda Marks

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

HR SECRETARY

£20,000 + Excellent Bens

An interesting and exciting opportunity to work for the HR Director of a major financial organisation. Excellent secretarial skills are required as well as organisational flair to manage this busy office. Good standard of education and shorthand preferred.

Please contact Margaret Sorohan.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

BANKING PLUS!

DESK ASSISTANT £20,000 + BONUS + BENS
A dynamic Equity Sales team require an assistant/secretary to organise travel, liaise with clients and complete research. Fluent French required.

DYNAMIC BOSSES £19,000 + MS + BENS
Manage two busy diaries, co-ordinate extensive travel plans and liaise with senior level clients... these are just a few of the duties involved in this exciting opening.

Please contact Melinda Marks or Margaret Sorohan.

Jonathan Wren & Co Ltd,
No.1 New Street, London EC2M 4TP
Tel: 0171 623 1266 Fax: 0171 626 5259

JONATHAN WREN

TRI-LINGUAL SECRETARY

An impressive European Government Agency has a position for a Senior Secretary with at least three European languages. Fluent Portuguese and English essential as is 3 years+ experience with Word 4 Windows and 50wpm for this excellent opportunity starting immediately.

£20,000

REED
EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES

For Executive Secretarial Positions In The West End. Tel: 0171 224 2820

PA/SECRETARY

A genuine PA role working for the Operations Director of this dynamic information company. This is a varied and interesting role ideally suited to an IT literate individual with drive and enthusiasm. Excellent MS Office skills will be rewarded with outstanding training prospects.

£20,000

For Executive Secretarial Positions In The City. Tel: 0171 638 1666

MARKETING

£22,000 + BENEFITS

The Managing Director of the Marketing Department of this large, blue chip PLC has a unique opportunity for a lively, client orientated Assistant to join his team. High levels of energy, exceptional written and verbal communication skills in conjunction with advanced Word for Windows are prerequisites. This role will be varied and will challenge even the most experienced of secretaries. In addition to the complex day to day management of this senior executive's life, project work and client involvement will form a large part of the job. A level education, 80/10wpm and a language are desirable.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

0171 814 0800

Angela Mortimer

JOSLIN ROWE

secretarial recruitment consultants

Shorthand Secretaries c£18,000 + Bens City/West End

We have a variety of positions for shorthand secretaries/PAs within financial and insurance companies. The roles vary but require good shorthand speeds (80-110wpm), fast accurate typing (60wpm) and knowledge of a wide range of systems including Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint. Previous experience within the City would be desirable along with a solid work history. Good organisational skills, a professional attitude and proactive approach to your work is essential for these roles.

Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House, 11 Bloomsbury Street
London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 382 9417

JOSLIN ROWE

secretarial recruitment consultants

Secretarial Administrator c£14,500 West End

A Covent Garden Management Consultancy is looking for a bright and proactive administrator for a varied role. The position is split between secretarial and administrative duties and will include new business processing, maintaining a library of product information, assisting in the collation of client reports and copy/typing. As you will be drafting your own correspondence and liaising with clients you will ideally have at least 1 years' secretarial experience and the confidence and flexibility to work in both a support role and independently. Word for Windows and good typing skills are essential. Powerpoint and experience of E-Mail would be very useful.

Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House, 11 Bloomsbury Street
London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 382 9417

The Susan Mills Portfolio

SEC/PA £20,000 + mtg

High profile, leading secretary with strong organisational skills required for Director + small team. Typ 60 wpm. WPM + own telephone skills 9.00-6.00 with some paid off.

Receptionist(x2) £16 + £19K
High profile, leading receptionist for 2 top offices, exp. immediately groomed and well spoken receptionists.

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Self sufficient Personal Assistant with either experience or a strong interest in Human Resources. Working for two senior Executives (with European wide responsibilities) and enjoying maximum delegation / project work. Company is American owned, dynamic, with varied business interests globally. London headquarters are in Mayfair and accommodation is new and interior designed. Worldwide staff number 55,000. A minimum of 5 years experience and Word for Windows, Powerpoint, Excel. Language skills useful - preferably German or French. Benefits include four weeks holiday rising to five and a day off for your birthday! Start as soon as possible.

Susan Doughty Recruitment

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secretarial recruitment consultants

Professional PA c£16,500 + Bens West End

This prestigious Management Company are currently looking to recruit a well presented PA to work directly for the Chief Executive. Must be well organised, able to prioritise work load and work on own initiative. There shall be a high percentage of administrative duties in addition to the normal secretarial role. Evidence of strong administrative and organisational skills required. Advanced knowledge of WordPerfect 6.1 and basic Excel essential. There shall be a very small amount of audio in addition to copy typing. Typing 50wpm.

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Bell Court House, 11 Bloomsbury Street
London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 382 9417

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career moves

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European Pharmaceuticals PR Account

TEAM SEC/CO-ORDINATOR £14,000

Pan European PR Account

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An exciting opportunity to join a leading international management consultancy as a Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive. The role will be varied and will challenge even the most experienced of secretaries. In addition to the complex day to day management of this senior executive's life, project work and client involvement will form a large part of the job. A level education, 80/10wpm and a language are desirable.

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer. All applicants are positively welcomed.

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The dynamic Managing Director of this successful business is looking for a new PA. The ideal person will have office administration, organisational, typing and computer skills. As you will be working for a boss who is happy to

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This holding company has media interests including publishing and TV. They need a senior level secretary to assist a board level director in an operational role. High profile position, VIP liaison with 30% of your time given to project based work. Good PC skills and 100 wpm shorthand. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

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Proactive, resourceful "thinking" PAs are needed for this large successful company. A true right hand to your boss with excellent skills, you can become fully involved in his professional life. Windows essential, shorthand useful. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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This international IT specialist, in West London, needs a personal assistant to support the head of operations. The position would ideally suit a traditional style secretary with director level experience and the ability to work on his / her own initiative. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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An excellent opportunity to join one of the world's leading energy companies. As an executive assistant you will expand your PA experience in a role which will give you your own responsibilities for research and reports. Microsoft Office experience essential. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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PR £18,000

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As well as appointments in office hours, we'll be here between 6pm and 8pm Monday to Thursday - just come along! On Saturday 22 March, we're making appointments between 10am and 4pm and for City temps we'll be in EC4 on Monday 24 March.
Just contact Cherie Macgregor-Skinner or Rachel Huggins on 0171 408 0425.
Tate, 70 - 71 New Bond Street, London W1Y 9DE.



GREYTHORN

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Not everyone enjoys working within the most busy and dynamic area of Investment Banking. There is always lots of overtime (ALL PAID), lots of typing, presentation work and client liaison at the highest level. If you do, you'll thrive under pressure, enjoy being part of a young and sociable team and be rewarded with a superb financial package. Essential skills: 65 wpm typing, Word, Powerpoint and Excel + previous banking exp useful.

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E-mail: greythorn@bt.com

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Good allrounder for future role in a busy, dynamic company. Excellent opportunity for a PA to expand their experience in a role which will give them their own responsibilities for research and reports. Microsoft Office experience essential. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

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Excellent opportunity to join an international company in WC2. You will have 18wpm + 20wpm typing and 60wpm shorthand. Essential skills: 65 wpm typing, Word, Powerpoint and Excel + previous banking exp useful.

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HOBSTONES

Personnel Secretary City £17,000

Large City law firm are looking for a bright enthusiastic second jobber who wishes to develop their career within a personnel environment. You should have 'O' level education along with 60 wpm typing and a professional attitude. In return they offer an excellent benefit package with a unique opportunity to get into Personnel. Call Kim Harris on 0171 550 7000

Kim Harris
0171 550 7000

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

This is a busy and interesting post, a person with excellent organisational and high quality office skills is required. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office and will be expected to take initiative and to be a team player. Essential skills: 65 wpm typing, Word, Powerpoint and Excel + previous banking exp useful.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

DESIGN SEC £17,500

Secretary needed for large fashion company in EC4. The work will involve high level of office skills, diary management and meeting organisation as well as general office duties. Will suit a person with previous experience in a similar role. Essential skills: 65 wpm typing, Word, Powerpoint and Excel + previous banking exp useful.

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Aldrich & Company

BRIGHT SPARK
£18,200 + Glittering Pkg
Marketing Assistant / Secretary needed for a young team in a high profile Food Management Company. This is a great chance to build a career, deal directly with clients and use your initiative. Call Emily Aldrich

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£18K + Great Bens
Act as complete right hand within HR of a city bank. Liaise with line managers and agencies, book temps on weekly basis, provide support, offer letters, induction packs etc. Busy and fun role. Call Sarah Tumbell

STEP INTO THE CITY
£18K plus o/t
This team of three young directors need some help. Would suit 2nd jobber with a confident & flexible approach. Masses of involvement and a really sociable department. Fabulous city office. Call Alex Glass

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Chief Executive - to £30,000
Arranging shooting parties and liaising with the stud manager will be part of your role when you support a well-known international investment banker from his City base.
The very nature of his business means he is constantly on the move travelling between London, New York, the Far East and elsewhere. Your role is to organise all aspects of his life, co-ordinate his hectic schedule, and liaise with his contacts worldwide. Skills 100/70.
0171 629 9323
DIRECTORS' SECRETARIES

Office Manager/PA Fashion
West End
c£18K + Package
Our client, an internationally famous upmarket fashion brand, is currently seeking a dynamic PA to work closely with the MD and Operations Director. You will be super organised, well presented, good humoured, and willing to become totally involved with the team. You will also be responsible for managing office issues and customer liaison. Shorthand at 70/80 wpm is desirable as is PC literacy specifically Excel.
For further information contact Verne Simmons.
SUCCESSION APPOINTMENTS: 7 AIR STREET - LONDON W1R 5RJ
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SENIOR HR ASSISTANT
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EXECUTIVE PA
£21,000 Package
A major blue-chip Management Consultancy is looking for a senior PA to support a Managing Director. Excellent opportunity for a PA to expand their experience in a role which will give them their own responsibilities for research and reports. Microsoft Office experience essential. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

TEMPS TO £12.00 PER HOUR
Top rates. Great jobs. User friendly consultants. Some of the best companies to work for, City & West End locations. How? Simple really, we want the best for you, our respected clients and ourselves. Good skills (possibly another language), adaptability and flexibility are the keys to successful temping. Whether you seek a long term contract, a temp to perm job or a few weeks here or there, we can help. So call us today.
Call Nicole Simmons on 0171 377 5590 or fax your CV to 0171 377 5590

Corporate Finance 19-22k + Bank Bens
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To find out more call Cross Selection: 0171 377 5590 or fax your CV to 0171 377 5590.

RECRUITMENT MANAGER W1 ADVERTISING AGENCY
c£27,000 + BENEFITS
Our clients are seeking an experienced Recruitment Manager to join our W1 branch of an international Advertising Agency. Responsibilities will include heavy recruitment of secretarial, IT, administrative and support staff, induction, compiling job descriptions, liaising with temporary and permanent agencies, etc. It is envisaged that the ideal candidate will be 28+, hopefully IFD qualified, extremely pro-active and highly motivated. This really is a first class career move! Please call Sandy or fax CV to
Rainbow Recruitment
12 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1DF
Tel: 0171 491 7252 Fax: 0171 491 2887

SH/SEC TO SALES DIRECTOR FASHION HOUSE
TO £20,000 + SUPERB BENEFITS
Would you like to work at the top? Are you an experienced Shortland Secretary with fine class skills, highly computer literate who would like to join the fast paced world of fashion? Busy Sales Director needs right hand support including consistent client contact, management liaison and being there to learn, you should have 50wpm and preferably shorthand.
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0171 814 0800
Angela Mortimer

JOSLIN ROWE
secretarial recruitment consultants
PA to Chief Executive
c£25,000 + Bens Putney
An international IT Company is seeking a calm and confident experienced PA (20-30 yrs old) who has extensive experience in the IT industry. As he travels a large amount, the suitable candidate will have the ability to work on their own initiative and take on responsibility. A young and friendly environment in which you will use your excellent interpersonal skills. Computer literate with a sound knowledge of MS Word for Windows, Excel, some Powerpoint and a typing speed of 50wpm.
Joslin Rowe Associates Ltd
Bell Court House, 11 Blomfield Street
London EC2M 7AY
Telephone: 0171 588 7287 Facsimile: 0171 582 9417

JOSLIN ROWE
secretarial recruitment consultants
Ami Professional Whiz!
c£16,000 + Bens City
Our client, a highly regarded insurance Group seeks a bright individual with excellent system skills. This is a rewarding opportunity for a committed secretary keen for involvement using Ami Professional and Lotus 123 extensively. Previous experience within a team environment would ideally suit as this role supports an Account Director and 2 other Account Executives. Key attributes include drive, enthusiasm, initiative and a sense of humour. The position offers responsibility and greater challenges for the right person.
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CONTRACTS ADMINISTRATOR W1 OIL COMPANY
TO £25,000 + ANNUAL BONUS
We require an experienced Administrator with a working knowledge of either the crude or petroleum industry. This is an American company based in W1 with offices worldwide. Duties include full responsibility of administering all the contracts produced by the trading team so you need accurate typing and must be computer literate. Team player essential - they work hard and play hard! Please call Elaine or fax CV to
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Tel: 0171 491 7252 Fax: 0171 491 2887

SH/SEC FOR DIRECTOR POLITICAL PR COMPANY
£18,000
Age immaterial! Exciting new, totally involving role has arisen for an sensitive, experienced, pro-active Shortland Secretary. Small W1 PR Company specialising in top profile clients including the political arena would like to meet you if you are confident and experienced as Director level. Maturity, common sense and a great sense of humour essential for this extremely interesting position. Team players only please! Please call Sandy or fax CV to
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12 South Molton Street, London W1Y 1DF
Tel: 0171 491 7252 Fax: 0171 491 2887

MAINE-TUCKER
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CHIEF PA TO CHAIRMAN £18K + Bens
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SLICK RECEPTION
up to £20,000 + Bens
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MAINE-TUCKER
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ADMIN/SECRETARY
up to £18,500 + free meals, sports facilities
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FESTIVALS

From Hollywood actress Kathleen Turner, treading the boards in Chichester this year...



FESTIVALS

...and Sir Simon Rattle, who conducts a concert in an exciting Bath fortnight...

THE TIMES ARTS



FESTIVALS

...to the City of London's celebration of Dracula's 100 years in the cinema...



FESTIVALS

...and fabulous spectacle at the Notting Hill Carnival: we select this summer's finest nights out

Premieres and pop stars, carnivals and choruses: Gillian Maxey previews the best of the British festivals

Top festival delights of summer '97

APRIL

Chichester Theatre: A starry line-up for the Festival Theatre's summer season: Ian McShane, Stephanie Beacham, Google Withers, Maureen Lipman and the Hollywood actress Kathleen Turner. Plays include *The Admirable Crichton*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Our Betters*, and *Divorce Me Darling*. Sandy Wilson's high-kicking sequel to *The Boyfriend*. April 18-Sept 27 (01243 781312)

MAY

Bath: Now in its 48th year, Classical, contemporary and jazz music, together with modern art, explore the theme "Resurrection". The Contemporary Music Weekend, with trail-blazing composer Iannis Xenakis, is an exciting addition, and the Clerical Medical Jazz Weekend makes a welcome return. Highlights include the Opening Night celebrations, Sir Simon Rattle, James Galway, Emma Kirkby, Steven Isserlis and an extensive Fringe Festival. May 16-June 1 (01225 463362)

Beverly and East Riding: Early music binge celebrates its tenth anniversary and new name with a musical journey through medieval North Africa, Renaissance Europe and 18th-century London. The Gabrieli Consort and Fretwork lead the way. May 1-11 (01482 884354)

BOC Covent Garden, London: Two weeks of opera and music theatre in the cultural heart of London embraces the contrasting themes of "Venetian Splendour" and "American Pleasure". Highlights include British Youth Opera's new production of *The Gondoliers*, the San Francisco music review, *Beach Blanket Babylon*, and Stephen Sondheim's cult musical, *Anyone Can Whistle*. May 26-June 7 (0171 312 1922)

Brighton: Colourful international festival encompassing the anniversaries of Schubert and Brahms. Premieres include *Danton's Tod*, Gottfried von Einem's French Revolution opera, Joshua Sobol's *The Village*, and *Waioira* by Maori playwright Hone Kouka. Contem-



Schubert fêted in Sheffield, Brighton and Malvern

porary and classical music, dance, literature and debate, films and exhibitions are concurrently with a programme of street theatre. May 3-25 (01273 676926)

Bury St Edmunds: Seventeen days on fete in the historic market town. Highlights include a Michael Tippett UK premiere, the world premiere of *The Roswell Incident* by Music Theatre Wales, drama from Methel and Madness and jazz from Carla Bley. Also, poetry, films, dance street theatre, comedy and a Viennese fireworks finale. May 9-25 (01284 759505)

Chelmsford Cathedral: Chamber, choral and keyboard music, sandwiched between orchestral concerts by the Britten Sinfonia and Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Other highlights include a production of *War Child* by National Youth Music Theatre, jazz from John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, and a fringe programme of talks, film, poetry and drama. May 7-17 (01245 358990)

Glasgow Mayfest: Citywide celebration of the arts, including music, dance, theatre, comedy, visual art, film, magic and storytelling. Opera: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's controversial *Resurrection*. Dance: UK premieres from Compania Antonio Gades and Les Ballets Africains. Theatre: Hector MacMillan's new play, *A Greater Tomorrow*, about Scots who fought in the Spanish Civil War. May 1-24 (0141 552 8444)

Glyndebourne: Six operas, 74 performances. New productions of Puccini's *Nanon Lescaut* (directed by Graham Vick, conducted by



Busking below the battlements: the casual fun of the vast Edinburgh Fringe — the world's biggest cultural jamboree — has spawned imitations around the country

John Eliot Gardiner in his Glyndebourne debut and Rossini's comic opera, *Le Comte Ory* (directed by Jérôme Savary). Revivals of Britten's *Owen Wingrave*, Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* and Handel's *Theodora*. Tickets from £10 to £114. May 18-August 24 (01273 813813)

Leeds: Music, mostly jazz, inspired by the roots and rhythms of New Orleans, Africa, South America, Russia, Germany, the West Indies and the mystery of the Far East. May 7-11 (0113 243 2491)

Malvern: Elgar in the Malvern Hills, plus Schubert and Brahms. Concerts by resident musician Tasmin Little, the Chillingham Quartet with Raphael Wallfisch, and the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. May 30-June 7 (01684 571225)

Newbury: A fortnight of festive entertainment. Percussionist Evelyn Glennie, cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker, guitarist Julian Bream, jazz from Humphrey Lyttelton. May 10-24 (01635 33421)

Perth: Festival amid breathtaking scenery, including French chamber music with pianist Pascal Rogé, Quatuor Parissi and London Winds. Artists include the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra and Helen Shapiro, while the film festival looks at "Scotland on the Silver Screen". May 23-June 1 (01738 472706)

Sheffield: The Lindsays and Friends explore Schubert and Brahms at this year's Music in the Round May Festival. May 10-24 (0114 276 9922)

JUNE

Aldeburgh: Founded by Britten, the Suffolk festival celebrates its half century with two premieres by Mark-Anthony Turnage: the music theatre piece, *The Country of the Blind*, based on a story by H.G. Wells, and *Twice Through the Heart*, a 30-minute dramatic scene with mezzo-soprano Sally Burgess. All three of Britten's Church Parables are performed on the same day, and Tabea Zimmermann gives the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's *Viola Concerto* and Britten's 1932 Double Concerto for Violin and Viola. June 13-27 (01728 453543)

City of London: St Mary-le-Bow's bells will ring out at the start of three weeks of opera, concerts, recitals, jazz, literary events, film and walks in the Square Mile. Highlights include a unique concert dramatisation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one hundred years of *Dracula* on film, choral concerts commemorating the tercentenary of St Paul's Cathedral, and the world premiere of Bernstein's *The White House Cantata*. June 19-July 10 (0171 377 0540)

Garsington: Operas on the terrace of the Jacobean manor, including the first British performance of Richard Strauss's *Die Aegyptische Helena* (directed by David Fielding). Haydn's *Le pescatore* (directed by Robert David MacDonald) and Mozart's *Cost fan tutte* (directed by Ian Judge). June 9-July 6 (01865 361636)

Glastonbury: The biggest and best of the summer rock festivals returns to the Somerset countryside after a two-year absence. This year's "cultural experience" promises 1,000 performances on 17 stages by more than 500 bands. Other entertainments include theatre, cabaret, comedy, circus performances, a children's adventure play area and educational workshops. Book early to avoid disappointment. May 27-June 29 (information 0839 665899, tickets 01179 767868)

Ludlow: Much Ado About Nothing (directed by Glen Walford) is this year's al fresco Shakespeare in the Castle. Plus An Evening with Joanna Trollope, David Jacobs Goes Name Dropping, a repeat of last year's Legends of the Sixties concert and A Tribute to Freddie Mercury and Queen. June 21-July 6 (01584 872150)

Luthansa Baroque Music, London: A banquet of Baroque music in the delightful setting of Christopher Wren's church of St James in Piccadilly. Joshua Rifkin, La Rumanesca, Concerto Italiano, Musica Antiqua Köln and Emma Kirkby among the early music luminaries taking part. June 6-28 (0171 238 6 888)

St Magnus: The Orkneys' annual arts bash. Music from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Kathryn Stott, Per Voldstad, the Vagabond String Quartet of Aberdeen, music ensemble Psappha, and "Orkneyings" — drama, dance and music in the community. Poetry by Kenneth White. June 30-25 (01856 872669)

Spitalfields, London: Music — classical, contemporary and early



Montserrat Caballé sings in Llangollen in July

— in Hawksmoor's Christ Church, Premieres from Judith Weir and David Bedford; Mendelssohn's Opus 44 quartets; mixed programmes from Fretwork, Westminster Cathedral Choir, Joyful Company of Singers and the Fine Arts Ensemble. Education and community events. June 4-25 (0171 377 0287)

Stour: Baroque and Renaissance music with Lynne Dawson, the Orlando Consort, Florilegium, et al, in the Pilgrim Church, Broughton Aluph, Kent. Opera Restor'd performs Lampe's comic opera, *The Dragon of Wantley*. June 20-29 (01233 812740)

Thaxted: Four weekends of music in the medieval village rejoice in the theme Courts, Coronations and Celebrations, with performances by the Britten Sinfonia, Gabrieli Consort and Players, the London Ragtime Orchestra and Kenny Ball and his Band. June 20-July 13 (01371 831421)

JULY

BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concerts: From the First Night to the Last, the 103rd season of the Proms will feature more than 70 concert performances and semi-stagings in the magnificent setting of the Albert Hall. Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Bartók are among the composers. The *Proms Guide* will be available from late April. July 18-September 13 (0171 765 5575)

Buxton: Opera in the Peak District spa town, complemented by orchestral concerts, chamber music, cabaret, jazz, masterclasses, the Young Artists series and festival masses. Resident baritone Donald Maxwell features in a triple bill of comic opera. Performances of Haydn's *Life on the Moon* and John Alver's music theatre piece, *My Dear Mozart*. July 11-27 (01298 70395)

Cambridge: Performing arts are the focus of this year's CamFest (June 10-July 19), while the Grassroots Festival of New Writing (June 23-July 19) and the Shakespeare Festival (June 30-end August) provide something for everyone. Early music throughout July and August. Pop in the Park (July 11) and the best in folk, blues, country and roots at the Folk Festival (July 25-27). June-August (01223 463363)

Cheltenham Music: Busy international festival incorporating classical, modern, symphony, chamber and solo recitals. An Austro-Germanic theme embraces the various anniversaries of Brahms, Schubert and Mendelssohn. Plus a Schwertsik premiere and Berlin cabaret songs. Music by Ockeghem and Poulenc, early music, jazz, film and music theatre. July 5-20 (01242 27377)

Chester: Summer music in the city's beautiful Grosvenor Park, with artist-in-residence, pianist Joanna MacGregor. Opera, with soloists Lesley Garrett and Bonaventura Bottoni, the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber, soprano Felicity Lott, the Orlando Consort, folk singer June Tabor and the Chester Mystery Plays. July 11-26 (01244 320722)

Chichester Festivities: A fireworks spectacular launches 17 days of entertainment, played out in the magnificent Norman cathedral and its environs. Symphony concerts, chamber music and jazz vie with exhibitions, opera, alternative comedy and celebrity lectures (including *Times* columnist Libby Purves). July 4-20 (01243 785718)

Fishguard: The composer Alun Hoddinott presides over a popular mix of choral, orchestral and recital music, this year celebrating the musical genius of Schubert and Steinway. Pianist Cécile Ousset and string ensemble Quatuor Parissi lead a friendly invasion from France to the Pembrokeshire coastal town and nearby St David's Cathedral. July 25-August 2 (01348 873612)

Greenwich and Docklands: Entering its second year of international programming, the festival begins a special relationship with Barcelona with a recreation of the city's celebrated *Dies de Dansa* festival in the grounds of the Royal Naval College, and performances by pianist Alicia de Larrocha and jazz maestro Tete Montoliu. Irvine Welsh's cutting-edge theatre piece, *Headstate*, and music from the Michael Nyman Band, Jools Holland, I Pagliolini and the Academy of Ancient Music add spice to the menu. July 11-20 (0181 305 1818)

Harrogate: World-class entertainment in the splendid spa town. International symphony orchestras, soprano Felicity Lott, Django Bates and Carol Kidd at the jazz fest, street theatre and Laifs at the Baths. July 25-August 9 (01423 562303)

Henley: Music and the arts on the banks of the Thames. Lesley Garrett and the BBC Concert Orchestra return to the floating stage. Pop, jazz and humour from the Temperance Seven, the band of the Royal Air Force, laser displays, fireworks, dance bands, cabaret, living sculpture, and Last Night flagwaving with mezzo-soprano Sarah Walker. July 9-12 (01491 411333)

King's Lynn: Cultures of the world unite with the help of Emma Kirkby, the Kirov Chamber Choir, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, flamenco by candlelight and a production of *The Merchant of Venice*. July 19-August 2 (01553 773578)

Lichfield: Lesley Garrett, Melvyn Tan, the BBC Philharmonic and

massed American choirs mark the anniversaries of Schubert, Brahms and Mendelssohn — and the 85th anniversary of the sinking of the *Titanic* (whose captain was a native of Staffordshire). July 4-13 (01543 257298)

Llangollen Eisteddfod: Six magical days of music, song and dance in North Wales. International choirs in daily competitions and evening concerts, and folk dancers in colourful national costume. Montserrat Caballé, Joanna



Glastonbury: the monster is back after a two-year absence

MacGregor, King's College Choir and the London Adventist Choral drop by. July 8-13 (01978 860236)

Phoenix: Britain's only four-day pop festival ranks alongside Glastonbury for attracting the happening acts of the year. Seven stages of music vie with comedy, funfairs and a circus. July 17-20 (0181 963 0940)

Warwick and Leamington: Early music, jazz, orchestral concerts, choral music and exhibitions amid the glorious architecture of medieval and Georgian Warwick and Regency Leamington. A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Treasure Island* and Viennese evenings with fireworks at the Castle. July 2-13 (01926 496277)

Womad: Family-orientated festival of world music, workshops, arts and crafts beside the Thames in Reading. Headline acts: Burning Spear, Mory Kanté, Faithless, Ravi Shankar and Carlinhos Brown. July 25-27 (0118 939 0930)

York Early Music: Medieval churches, historic houses and ancient guildhalls house Britain's biggest festival of early music. The human voice is celebrated with performances of Handel's *Belshazzar* by the King's Consort and Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* by Opera North. Also taking part, the Choir of King's College Cambridge, the BBC Singers, and Italian ensemble La Reverdi in its British debut. July 4-13 (01904 658338)

AUGUST

Arundel: Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* in the castle grounds and concerts in the Barons' Hall. Fireworks, jazz, family shows, folk, art gallery trail and Felicity Lott. August 22-31 (01903 883690)

Edinburgh International: Fiftieth anniversary celebrated with a look back to the premieres and highlights of the past. Visiting artists to Scotland's capital will include the Royal Opera, San Francisco Ballet, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Bryn Terfel, Mikhail Pletnev and Steven Isserlis. Innovative theatre and outrageous stand-up in the enormous Fringe festival (Aug 10-30, 0131 226 5257), preceded by the syncretic rhythms of the Jazz and Blues fest (Aug 2-10, 0131 557 1642). International Festival August 10-30 (0131 226 4001)

Edinburgh Film: International festival featuring David Lynch's *The Highway*, a retrospective of director Edgar G. Ulmer and a new focus on documentaries. *The Graduate* is the subject of this year's popular *Scene by Scene*. August 10-24 (0131 228 4051)

Hereford, Three Choirs: Europe's oldest choral festival celebrates the anniversaries of Schubert, Mendelssohn and Brahms, with birthday tributes to the composers John Gardner, John Joubert and Paul Patterson. Premieres include a new choral and orchestral work by Judith Bingham and *Paradise Lost*, a new choral work based on Milton's epic poem, complemented by a lively Fringe. August 17-22 (01432 274455)

Notting Hill: Annual celebration of black culture explodes onto the streets of London amid a carnival atmosphere of music, dance and spectacular costumes. Two million spectators expected. August 24-25 (0181 964 0544)

Reading: Long-established, unadulterated rock festival with a reputation for attracting the top names from America. August 22-24 (0181 963 0940)

V97: Last year's newcomer to the rock scene, V96, enters its second year under the patronage of Virgin Cola Company. Headline acts at Hylands Park in Chelmsford and at Newsam Park in Leeds are expected to include the Prodigy, Blur, Kula Shaker, Beck and the Foo Fighters. August 16 and 17 (0171 734 8932)

SEPTEMBER

North Wales, St Asaph: Music with the emphasis on youth, hence appearances by the National Youth Choir and Chamber Orchestra of Wales and a host of young artists. New works by Pwyll ap Iwan, Lyn Davies and resident composer Alun Hoddinott, presented in the magnificent cathedral. September 20-27 (01745 584508)

Windsor: Peter Donohoe and Travelling Opera in the Castle, James Bowman and the Consort of Viols at Eton College. September 21-October 5 (01753 623400)

OCTOBER

Canterbury: The Royal Shakespeare Company, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Phoenix Dance Company and George Gershwin's centenary. Classical concerts in the cathedral nave and intimate recitals in the crypt. Jazz and opera in the Marlowe Theatre, world music, folk and blues in the Festival Club. October 11-25 (01227 452853)

Cheltenham Literature: Readers and writers come together in a carnival atmosphere for a varied programme of talks, lectures, debates, poetry readings, exhibitions and cutting-edge drama. October 10-19 (01242 227799)

Dance Umbrella, London: Contemporary dancers from Britain and abroad gather in the South Bank Centre, the Place and Riverside Studios. Workshops, dance films and meet-the-artist sessions. October 21-mid November (0181 741 5881)

Norfolk and Norwich: East Anglia's burgeoning festival of the performing arts with more than 120 events in and around Norwich celebrating the theme *My Country*. Orchestral concerts, jazz, dance, theatre, comedy — and the stage premiere of William Alwyn's opera, *Miss Julie*. October 8-19 (01603 764764)

● A guide to European festivals will appear on April 2

■ VISUAL ART

Vermeer and I: David Hockney talks about the influences behind his new flower paintings



■ MUSIC 1

Zubin Mehta conducts an uneasy concert to mark the golden jubilee of Indian independence

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ MUSIC 2

... while Mark Wigglesworth steers his Welsh orchestra through an exhilarating Stravinsky night



■ TOMORROW

How does Star Wars rate, second time round? Read Geoff Brown on this week's film releases

How does his garden grow?

David Hockney tells Richard Cork why his forthcoming London show will be full of exuberant flower paintings

By choosing flowers as the main subject of his new London exhibition, David Hockney is implicitly aware that he offers us a challenge. "I know that there's a prejudice against flower paintings," he says, "pacing around the spectacular skylit room at the Annely Juda gallery for a trial hang of his luminous canvases. "I also realise that artists have rarely made memorable pictures of flowers, but I chose them as a theme to cheer myself up." Besides, he likes the idea of breaking all those taboos about chocolate-box prettiness. "My first idea for the show's title," he says with an anarchic grin, "was *Flowers, You're All Flowers*."

Despite Damien Hirst's ever-burgeoning notoriety, Hockney remains Britain's best-known and most popular contemporary artist. Strangely, though, he has not staged a large exhibition of new work on a London dealer's premises for 20 years. As if to compensate, the Juda show is his biggest ever in a commercial gallery: more than 30 small portraits will be hung in the room below the display of 18 still-life paintings. But why has there been such a long gap?

"Well, I've spent a lot of time working in the theatre, and I don't do enough painting," he explains. Hockney comes over to England from his Californian home about four times a year, but principally to stay with his family in Yorkshire. Portraits of his relatives will be included in the exhibition, testifying to his belief that sitters should already have familiar faces: "If you don't know them, you don't know enough about them."

His family relationships are especially close. "My mother's 96, and she can hear better than I can," he says wryly, saddled now with hearing aids in both ears. But he looks sprightly. Approaching his 60th birthday in July, he claims to "feel about 30". And he shifts incessantly in his chair during our conversation, smoking Camel cigarettes while forever thrusting out his arms with instinctive theatricality to reinforce the flow of words.

The starting-point for the flower pictures, all painted in a great rush of enthusiasm last year, was a visit to the Vermeer retrospective at the Hague. "It was incredibly impressive," he recalls. "Although Vermeer's colour is more than 300 years old, it's last longer than MGM's. I was amazed at how dull everything

seemed when you came out of the show." So the often startling brightness of Hockney's flower pictures can be seen, in part at least, as his exhilarated and competitive response to Vermeer's radiance.

They are also, perhaps more significantly, the outcome of his desire to scrutinise the thing itself. In the past, he has often worked from photographs or his own imagination. But this time he worked only from life. "I've always had flowers in the house," he says. "And since Los Angeles is semi-tropical, even the

ings in a collector's house was like walking into a flower. In a way, everything is an abstraction if it's a picture."

Over the past few years, Hockney has pushed his own painting in an abstract direction. But these limpid flower pictures mark a change, and he clearly revelled in the particular character of the species he chose. The grand sunflowers canvas was inspired by a gift from his friend Jonathan Silver, whose Salts Mill gallery in Bradford has a permanent display of Hockney's work. "Jonathan sent me all these sunflowers for my birthday," he remembers with a grin.

Taking on such a subject meant, inevitably, risking comparison with Van Gogh. But Hockney did not feel daunted. On the contrary: he relished the challenge posed by the blazing sunflowers. "Yellow is not a common colour in painting," he says, "but Van Gogh said it was the colour of hope. People are timid about colour, they don't like it."

Hockney manifestly does. He basks in the brazen, festive impact of the flowers in these unfettered canvases. But he is conscious, too, of their ability to symbolise transience. Even the most innocuous of 17th-century Dutch flower paintings can easily turn out to be a memento mori. And Hockney, when pressed, admits that "I'm interested in fragility as a subject". He found himself painting the flowers fast, in order to ensure that they did not wither and perish before he had finished.

"Every single day they altered, and I even saw a cactus growing when I included it in a still life with lemons." Change fascinates him as much as space, and the speed with which Hockney worked undoubtedly contributes to the pictures' liveliness. "Flowers shoot upwards in great celebratory bursts," he says eagerly, waving his hands in the air as if to mimic the eruptive impact of a fireworks display.

He has, of course, painted flowers before: one of his most-reproduced works, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*, includes a particularly appealing vase of white lilies on a low table. But never before has Hockney devoted such single-minded energy to the subject, nor produced so many flower paintings in a sustained bout of exploration.

He finds working alone in the studio is a tonic after spending a major part of his time on demanding, and often exhausting, opera designs. "I've finished with the



David Hockney in front of 30 Sunflowers: "I react to the way my eyes dance around the flowers"

theatre now," he says. "It's an ephemeral art, making me give months and months to something that only lasts a few hours. In the theatre, collaboration means compromise, and I'd rather get back to painting on my own. I take out my hearing aids and work in complete silence."

He only stopped painting flowers

last year because his opera commitments obliged him to visit Australia for two major productions. "But when I return to California now, I shall just go back to flowers again. For me, it's a terrific subject."

Does the Juda exhibition mean that he is becoming more involved with London, or will he spend the rest of his life in the Californian sun?

"I'm a bit claustrophobic," he confesses, "and that's why I live in LA. I like big, white, open spaces. I love the vastness of the American West. England is small, and I've been abroad too long to come back now."

David Hockney's exhibition, *Flowers, Faces and Spaces*, opens at Annely Juda Fine Art, 33 Dering Street, London W1 (0171-639 7578) on May 1

Saving our soul

LEWIS TAYLOR'S excellent debut album last year was a cultural conundrum: white men simply are not supposed to be this soulful. Lewis Taylor manages to be cool and contemporary but also deeply reverential to its rock and soul heritage. It is the sound of what might have happened if Marvin Gaye and Jimi Hendrix had made an album together with Brian Wilson as producer.

With the help of some celebrity endorsements from David Bowie and others, momentum is still building for the album more than six months after its release. And thanks to this intelligent book-

POP

**Lewis Taylor
Ronnie Scott's, W1**

ing, Taylor has made Ronnie Scott's the place to bring an enquiring musical mind during March with a run of Sunday night shows.

Opening with *Whoever*, he and his band were at once well drilled and in repose, dangling the track's pulsative groove in front of a crowded room like a hypnotist's pendulum. "Be prepared," he sang, "things can get a little bit tasty," accurately foretelling the invigorating hour that followed.

Taylor has learnt Gaye's soul vocabulary from A to Z, elongating the vowel in the word "baby" like a true lost son of Motown, but he can peel off a lick like the brogue fan he also is, and sings of vexed modern relationships with a lyrical touch that would bring a smile from Curtis Mayfield.

So he may have the keys to the Motor City—achievement enough for a boy from Burnet in north London—but Taylor has also cracked the combination of electric guitar, full-flavour funk and rich harmonies that kept their shape on stage. *Tract and Damn* went beyond his finger-snapping norm, making you want to sing along, and the forthcoming single *Sittin' Sweet* was aptly named.

Most endearingly, Taylor is not at home to pretentious solemnity, smiling with his bandmates and thanking us sincerely. The theory that Caucasian soulfulness begins and ends with Jamiroquai may need some adjustment.

PAUL SEXTON

CONCERTS: Shankars with sitars and Mahler makes three; celebrating Stravinsky; new baritone on the block

Bombay to Vienna

LSO/Mehta
Barbican

Indian independence may be sufficiently ancient history for its 50th anniversary to be celebrated, as it was by the London Symphony Orchestra on Monday night, without political embarrassment. Whether traces of cultural hegemony can be so easily masked is another matter.

The evening was a festive one, presenting, in the first half, works by Indian composers, and in the second half Mahler's First Symphony, all conducted by the Bombay-born Zubin Mehta. Ravi Shankar, the former guru now nearly 77, appeared with his 15-year-old daughter Anoushka in his own Concerto No 1 for Sitar and Orchestra of 1971, and it was here that the cultural mix seemed most problematic. When Shankar gives himself the space to ruminate, unimpeded by orchestral intermissions, he is at his most evocative, but when he has the strings racing around like headless chickens, the result is anonymous.

The third movement (*Raga Adana*) begins atmospherically with horns and upper strings, before lower strings and wind sustain quiet octaves under a beautiful sitar solo. This minimal interaction works well, but all too soon we are back to the characteristic racing figures. With the final movement come lively antiphonal exchanges and passages of invigorating complexity for the two sitars and drums.

The precise role of Miss Shankar—her part rarely seemed independent—was unclear, but the sight of revered icon and glamorous daughter seated together on the floor brought them a standing ovation.

Nareish Sohal's *Sayagraha*, commissioned by the LSO for the occasion, positively invited disaster by dramatising the struggle for independence by way of the Indian tune *Ram Dhan* and the British supremacist anthem *Rule, Britannia*. The latter is offensively brassy and is finally subdued by the meditative *Ram Dhan*. But aside from a few exotic effects involving harp and celeste, we were back here to the less-than-imaginative block scoring of Sohal's compatriot.

A moment of suspended animation in the first movement of Mahler's Symphony No 1 made the coupling seem less arbitrary. In any case this is a repertoire on which Mehta has an individual take. Characteristic were his exhilarating dash to the finish of the first movement, and the ubiquitous startling gestures (in all departments, not least percussion). But the faraway, dreamy lullaby of the third movement was also nicely conceived, and if the dance music is indeed a Jewish wedding, then the E flat clarinet was a spectral guest.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Stravinsky for all seasons

BBCNOW/
Wigglesworth
Festival Hall

SUNDAY'S BBC National Orchestra of Wales concert was presented under the banner of two festivals, *Stravinsky: Rites of Spring and Sounding the Century*, so it was fitting that the programme felt so festive. It began with *Fireworks* and ended with *Petrushka*, two popular pieces which framed a pair of Stravinsky's less frequently played scores.

The programming was thoughtful. All the music came from the first two decades of Stravinsky's long, creative life, yet it showed how even early on the composer never ceased to reinvent himself. Nowhere was this better shown than in *Apollon*, perhaps the most humane of his Neo-Classical works. It is scored for strings alone, and written in a wistful musical language that suggests Elgar with a few "wrong notes" thrown in. Mark

Wigglesworth, music director of the BBCNOW, conducted a deeply felt performance that was alert to the work's ingenious structure. He summoned up its calm serenity, but softened the edges of the opening almost too much.

It was exciting to hear Stravinsky's seldom performed *Op 2, The Faun and the Shepherdess*, and there will be another chance to catch it when the concert is broadcast by Radio 3 tomorrow. With texts taken from Pushkin, it is a suite of three songs for mezzo-soprano and orchestra modelled on 19th-century styles. Tchaikovsky is evoked, but the music has a sound all of its own, especially

when matching the sly eroticism of Pushkin's verses. Sarah Walker was the soloist, completely inside the idiom. *Fireworks*, a compact, exhilarating score dating from just two years after these songs, was there, but the playing could have been tauter.

But there was no lack of brilliance or tightness in Wigglesworth's account of *Petrushka*. His conducting had both fluidity and precision; solos took on expressive freedom and the orchestra revelled in the big tunes. Street-cries and folksongs jostled each other in this picture of wintry St Petersburg, but this was no neo-folksy interpretation: in its bracing, spiky way it showed that *The Rite of Spring* was just around the corner.

JOHN ALLISON

Too full facial

Genz/McGreevy
Wigmore Hall

through. In short, one longed for more voice, less face.

Throughout, Roger Vignoles's piano playing was thrillingly eloquent. In order to match it, Genz will have to calm down a little, breathe more deeply, take a step away from his teachers and simply allow his voice to sing more.

Geraldine McGreevy, winner of the 1996 Kathleen Ferrier Award, also made a

somewhat tentative debut at the Wigmore Hall, but for almost diametrically opposite reasons. In a highly imaginative programme, which included music by Ravel, Warlock, Hugh Wood, Schumann and Strauss, McGreevy revealed a beautifully groomed, sweetly melodic soprano, but a somewhat bland performance.

McGreevy had a natural talent for the French repertoire, but for the disturbed doppelgänger of Hugh Wood's Robert Graves setting, *The Forbidding*, the voice has yet to discover its shadow side.

McGreevy, unlike Genz, needs to work harder at working her audience, and at focusing her responses more intensely on text and subtext.

HILARY FINCH

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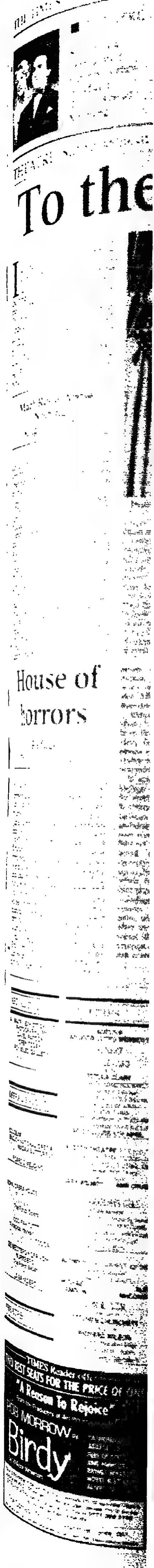
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With the general election fixed for May 1, we asked the three major parties to outline their policies for the future of Britain's housing

Our plans for the roof over your head

THE LABOUR PARTY

By Nick Raynsford, MP
HOUSING SPOKESMAN

Current housing policies and programmes are hopelessly inadequate. A new approach is called for. In Labour's view there are four overriding priorities. First, we must learn the lessons of the 1980s. At that time all too many people overextended themselves, believing that once they got their foot on the bottom step of the housing market, the escalator would carry them up to greater personal wealth. They made a terrible mistake and paid a very heavy price for it.

While house prices may rise ahead of general inflation for a year or two as we come out of recession, it is not realistic to expect substantial year on year increases in house prices while general inflation is held to 2 per cent or lower.

We also need to take steps to protect homeowners from the mis-selling of mortgages and related products, from other abuses in the market and from the risk of unnecessary repossession. Our proposals for tackling the re-emerging problem of gazumping have been widely welcomed, as have our plans for leasehold reform. Our flexible tenure proposals will both help people on modest incomes to progress by stages towards owner-occupation and assist others who, as a result of changing financial circumstance, might otherwise face the loss of their homes.

Labour offers a package of reforms to help to restore stability in the housing market and to provide new opportunities and safeguards for homeowners. At the same time we will revive the provision of social housing through local authorities, housing associations and new partnerships. This is the second key objective. We will release, on a phased basis, the receipts which councils have obtained from selling land and housing but which they are currently prevented from spending.

It must make sense to put these capital receipts back to use, building homes for the homeless and renovating run-down estates and, in the process, helping to generate jobs in the construction industry.

Thirdly, to increase flexibility in the market and opportunities for people to move areas, we will encourage a revival in good quality private rented accommodation. We support housing investment trusts as a mechanism for increasing



institutional investment in private renting and will be looking closely at how we can help such bodies to develop in the years ahead.

We also need to break down the growing polarisation in housing which has created concentrations of poverty and deprivation in certain parts of our country. Indeed, measures to tackle unemployment, crime and vandalism are equally essential. But housing policies play a vital part. We must ensure that new developments provide opportunities for people to rent or to buy without undue segregation between the tenures.

We must also ensure that rent and benefit policies make it possible for people to get off benefit and into work. Helping to build strong and mixed communities is a vital part of a new housing policy.

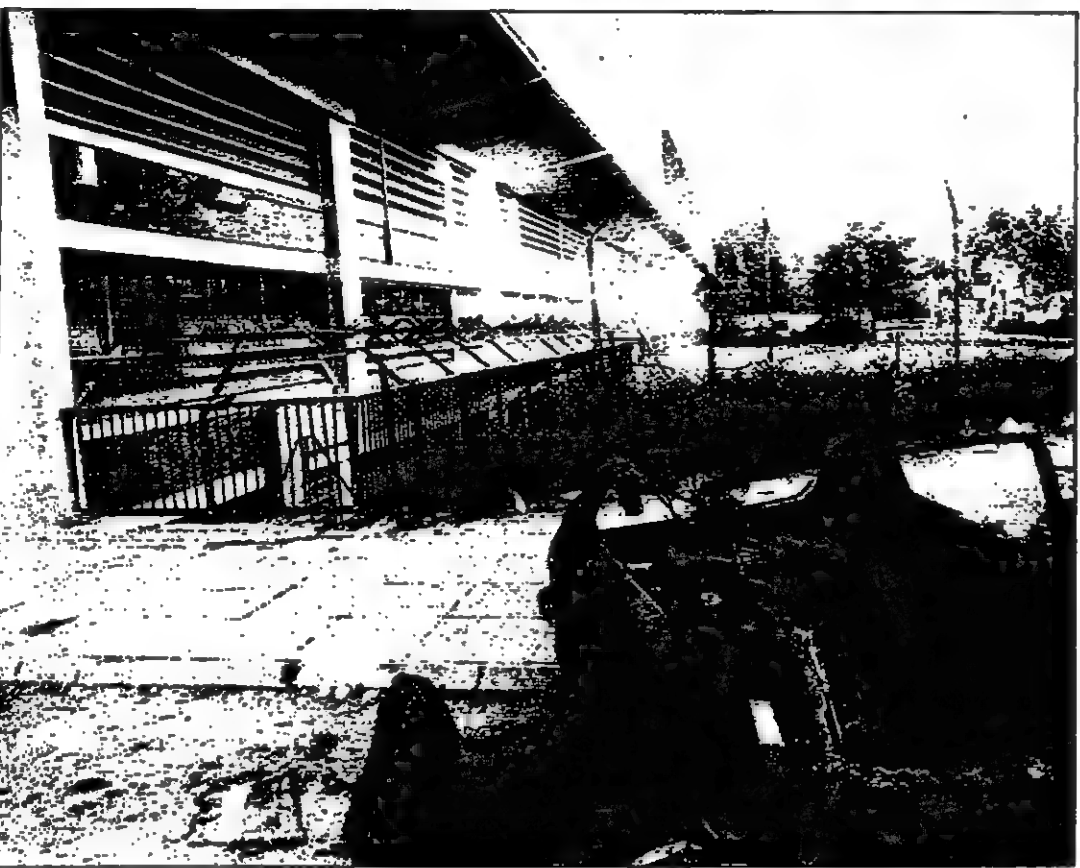
Finally, we must tackle the backlog of poor condition properties in all tenures. New public/private partnership can help to bring private investment into areas of older, unmodernised council housing. A new approach towards home renovation policy can ensure that public money is used more effectively to lever in additional private investment and make it possible to develop strategic area-based renovation programmes.

A national licensing scheme for multi-occupied houses will help to raise standards in this sub-section of the market where the worst conditions are to be found, and at the same time reduce the tragic loss of life through fires and carbon monoxide poisoning in such premises.

Our new environmental task force will help to tackle the problem of hard-to-heat properties and in the process enable elderly people on low incomes to enjoy affordable warmth in the winter months.



The two faces of Britain's housing stock: the private residence and the run-down council estate



THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

By David Curry,
HOUSING MINISTER



The most important challenge for the next government will be to combine a competitive economy with the delivery of effective and affordable welfare in the broadest sense. We have spelt out how we will address this need in pension provision and care of the elderly and are already delivering these policies in housing. The heart of our policy is:

- A real choice of tenure to provide a mobile workforce and meet individual needs.
- Sustainable home ownership.
- Bringing new partners into social housing in recognition of the reality (however unpalatable) that no government is going to revert to large-scale public financing and subsidised housing, and addressing the problems of inner-city estates by bringing housing and regeneration policies together.

Over the past 18 years we have given millions the chance to buy a home for the first time in their lives. We have given council and some housing association tenants the right to buy their home at a discount. More than two million tenants have bought their homes since 1979, 1.7 million of them thanks to our Right to Buy policy.

Our economic policies are making it easier for first-time buyers to enter the market and we will continue to help council and housing association tenants who can afford it into home ownership. As a result, we expect a further 1.5 million people to become home owners over the next ten years.

But there are many people who do not want or cannot afford their own home. They also deserve a choice of housing. We have encouraged a thriving private rented sector. Since 1988, when we deregulated the sector allowing landlords to charge a market rent, the number of families living in private rented accommodation has increased by nearly 400,000. We will sustain the revival, encouraging more institutional investment through housing investment trusts.

We will continue to help housing associations and local housing companies to provide new housing at sub-market rents for families with low incomes. Since 1988, housing associations have had access to private finance. To date, they have secured £6.4 billion of private sector investment.

We must tackle the problem of the worst estates and give opportu-

nity to tenants locked into these municipal fieldoms. The rationale behind housing transfers is to mobilise private sector funding for a public good. To date, 53 local authorities have transferred their housing to new landlords, raising more than £3.8 billion in private finance.

The new landlord buys the stock on the basis that it remains as social housing with sub-market rents. They can use private money to improve homes without increasing public spending and taxes. Transfers take place only with the consent of tenants.

The Housing Act 1996 enables councils to transfer their stock to a wider range of landlords, such as local housing companies which offer councils the chance to retain an interest in the stock.

This year's Budget contained a number of measures which make transfer even more attractive, including a three-year holiday from the LSVT receipts levy (local authorities were required to pay the Exchequer 20 per cent of what was left of any receipt arising from a transfer after any outstanding debt on the stock had been repaid) and more money for our Estates Renewal Challenge Fund.

Given the constraints on public expenditure across the developed world, transfers are the best way of getting more investment in the public sector stock.

Last, but not least, we are helping those in the greatest need. Between April 1990 and March 1996 we spent more than £180 million under the Rough Sleepers Initiative. As a result, the number of people sleeping on the streets of central London has fallen from more than 1,000 to under 200. We are continuing the scheme in central London and extending it to other areas.

WHERE I LIVE

I LIVE with my wife and three daughters in my constituency of Greenwich. Nick Raynsford writes. We have a comfortable house with plenty of space for us and our three cats. It is our only home. One of the great benefits of representing a London constituency is that one does not need to split one's life between separate London and constituency homes.

Our home is important to us and is a focus for a lot of activity. My wife, Anne, is a keen gardener and has spent much of the past four years transforming the garden. She and I share a study where we can work without getting under each other's feet.

I am very conscious of how lucky we are to have such a lovely home. It is a constant reminder of the benefit which people derive from having a secure base. It is one of my strongest political ambitions to ensure that every member of society has that prospect too.

Most MPs make nice comments about their constituencies but I can truly say, with hand on heart, that Greenwich is a wonderful place to live. Tourists come to see the historic buildings and will come in even larger numbers to the Millennium Exhibition in three years' time. But Greenwich is not a museum. It is a genuine community and we are very proud and happy to live here.

THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

By Diana Maddock, MP
HOUSING SPOKESWOMAN



WHERE I LIVE

Liberal Democrat policies for housing are based on our recognition of the diversity of people's needs. Not everyone wants to own their own home, and housing provision has to take into account variations in demand and cost.

The proposals we are putting forward are based on flexibility, to allow local authorities and developers to make the right decisions about how much new social housing is needed, and how to finance it.

Our approach dictates that prevention is more efficient than treatment. Since homelessness is such a problem, it is surely wise to ensure that fewer people are being made homeless in the first place.

In the house price collapse of the early 1990s, a third of a million people lost their homes. Our housing policy addresses this by proposing to phase out universal mortgage interest tax relief for first-time buyers and replace it with a means-tested mortgage benefit, which would allow full payment of mortgage interest (up to a ceiling) for families on income support and low incomes. This saves the cost of rehousing evicted families and paying housing benefit for private rented accommodation.

As far as the private rented sector is concerned, it seems that the

present Government is preparing to put more of a burden upon it than it can possibly bear. The new changes in housing benefit will mean that more and more single benefit claimants will be seeking private sector lettings. The Government has done little or no research into the amount of quality accommodation available. These benefit restrictions need to be reversed.

In terms of new social housing, we propose to remove restrictions on local government and give it the freedom to invest more in social housing. We want to give local authorities the opportunity to invest by phasing the release of capital receipts according to the needs of individual areas. At the

same time we want radically to reform the way local authorities can raise the money to invest in housing.

By adopting the General Government Finance Deficit as the main measure of public borrowing, we would allow public accounts to show the true value of investment in homes, investment which saves money by taking families out of expensive temporary accommodation. This would also allow local authorities to set up housing corporations which could raise money through loans and investment.

We favour investment in bricks and mortar rather than expensive benefit subsidies - we've not forgotten that the cost of housing

benefit has soared from £4 billion to £10 billion in ten years.

There is much we can do to ensure that existing housing stock is used effectively. It seems scandalous that there are 790,000 empty properties in England and Wales. Research estimates that around 125,000 empty homes could be refurbished for less than £5,000 each. Under Liberal Democrat housing policies, local authorities could bring into use any property left empty without reasonable cause for more than 12 months.

We also have plan to refurbish existing housing: more than four million people are living in houses classed as unfit for habitation.

There is progress to be made in energy saving: my own Home Energy Conservation Act, which became law in 1995, went some way to ensuring that new and existing homes could be energy-efficient. Liberal Democrats are also advocating reducing VAT rating of energy-saving building materials.

Tenants should have the power to make decisions on serious matters such as competitive tendering. We are particularly concerned at new DoE proposals to award housing investment money only where local authorities have put in place a plan for transfer of social housing to the private sector.

Democrats are the largest party on the council. It is not just the council that is close. From my home I can walk to most places I need: my constituency office, the station and town centre shops and restaurants are only a few minutes away. I can also get to the leisure centre near by, and visit Christchurch Priory where there are regular concerts.

So my cottage is very important to me. It's a still point in a hectic world.

The only drawback of being so near to a river is that the cottage has been flooded in the past. Now the Environment Department is putting up flood barriers.

From the road side, I am overlooked by council offices. Initially, the Conservative administration viewed me (literally) with great suspicion as they could see from their offices my every coming and going.

Now, of course, the Liberal

WHERE I LIVE

I LIVE in a 19th-century Victorian farmhouse - without the farm, David Curry writes. A very plain white Cambridgeshire brick cube, it was the sort of place my wife always said she could "do something with".

The "something" has been to add terraces, an open porch (replacing a sort of dog kennel of a tunnel) and shutters - my wife is French.

We've converted the bit of cereal field attached to the house into garden (the first year the farmer managed to harvest the hedge as well as the wheat, including a vegetable garden where I fight a permanent war to defend it from being used by my father as an "overdow" for plants surplus to the flower borders).

I love two things about the house. Inside, its orientation makes it very luminous. Outside, when I get home from London the air is sweet and soft and, at times, rich with the scent of laburnum and mahonia. The cycle of the garden, made up of the predictable seasons each punctuated by a thousand surprises (not all happy surprises), makes a necessary therapy for the conflicts of politics.

But therapy is not relaxation - a garden is unremittingly demanding. It is the energy spent, not the energy saved, which is the greatest pleasure.

For sale: Major's wartime haven

Eve-Ann Prentice on a humble terraced cottage with an intriguing history

Just weeks before John Major faces the possible upheaval of finding a new house, the Norfolk cottage which was his evacuation home during the war has gone on sale.

The 15-month-old future Prime Minister was taken to the mid-terrace cottage in the remote village of Saham Toney, near the market town of Watton, by his mother and father after a doodlebug flying bomb exploded uncomfortably close to the Major family's home in Brixton and sent shards of glass flying into his car just seconds after the infant had been lying in it.

John Major was probably too young to form vivid memories of his time at the four-bedroom cottage, which went on sale last week. But his elder brother, Terry Major-Ball, recalls the future Prime Minister being the subject of intense interest among some German prisoners of war staying in the village when they tried to teach the toddler the Nazi salute.

In his book, *Major Major*,

Memories of an Older Brother. Major-Ball writes: "That was the last straw. My mother Gwen flew at them and a group of English and German NCOs came to see what the fuss was about."

"They could not apologise enough. They reported the matter and said it would never happen again. In fact, we did not see any more prisoners."

The Majors took refuge in Norfolk in July 1944, when the aerial bombardment of the Blitz had ended but Londoners were being terrorised by doodlebugs and V2s - known as "flying gas mains" because the explosions caused by them were ascribed by the Government to gas main blasts. The Majors' next-door neighbours in London, who had earlier fled the Blitz to stay with relatives in Saham Toney, helped the future PM's family to find

accommodation in the village. The Majors stayed until April 1945, but kept a link with Saham Toney when John Major's sister Pat took a ginger cat, which she named Saham, back to London.

Present-day villagers in Saham Toney were said to be unaware of the link with Mr Major until Terry Major-Ball's book was published last year.

Audrey Pickering, whose family lived in the Majors' wartime refuge since the early 1940s, has put the house on the market for £55,000.

She said yesterday: "I thought they were pulling my leg when I was first told John Major had lived here. Then his brother came here, and he was a very nice man. Personally, I think John seems very nice, too, and I don't think he should be blamed for everything."

Mrs Pickering has lived in the

house for 14 years and her mother moved there nearly 33 years ago. She is selling because her husband, Michael, died recently and she is looking for somewhere smaller. "I love the house but I am hoping to find a little bungalow now," she said.

The house is described by the estate agents Mullenger & Co, who are selling it, as "a deceptively spacious mid-terrace cottage... only a short walk from the local primary school, shop/sub-post office and local pub."

Should Mr Major be tempted to return to his evacuation home, he will be pleased to know it has been considerably modernised since his days there - when there was no running water. In his book, Terry Major-Ball recalls fetching water from a well, whereas the bathroom today boasts a bidet as well as bath, wash basin and low-level WC.

So far no one has been to view. Anyone interested should contact Mullenger & Co in Watton, Norfolk, on 01953 883474.



John Major's home as a toddler: it was here that German prisoners tried to teach him the Nazi salute

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RACING: O'SULLEVAN FEATURED IN DOCUMENTARY TO MARK 150TH AINTREE SHOWPIECE

BBC unveils National treasures

By JULIAN MUSCAT

PETER O'SULLEVAN, the BBC racing commentator preparing to call his fifth Grand National, is featured prominently in the build-up to the historic steeplechase on April 5.

Staff at the Grandstand programme, which commenced at 12.15 on the big day, are compiling a feature on O'Sullivan's Grand National scrapbook in what will almost certainly be his last commentary on the great race. It has been O'Sullivan's long-held ambition to complete 50 years behind the microphone at Aintree.

"It will be a big story on a big occasion," Dave Gordon, editor of *Grandstand*, said yesterday. "The piece with

Tony McCoy will be sidelined for ten days after being knocked unconscious when falling from Strong Tel in the last race at Uttoxeter yesterday.

Peter is one of a number of ideas we have to celebrate the 150th running of the Grand National. There are so many offbeat stories to choose from but Peter's achievement will be recognised. Additionally, the Aintree executive will unveil a bust of O'Sullivan on the course on Grand National day.

Known as 'The Voice of Racing' for his mastery of the art, O'Sullivan spoke yesterday of the immense preparation required to commentate on one of the most unpredictable of sporting events. The thought of it filled him with terror. It was with gratitude, he said, that he could reflect on his close and lengthy association with the unique steeplechase.

Should Time For A Run prevail a fortnight on Saturday, a different kind of gratitude will be felt by an anonymous punter who laid



Aidaniti and Champion sail over Becher's Brook on their way to a famous victory in the 1981 Grand National

out £21,800 on the Irish-trained horse. The man, who walked into William Hill betting shop in London with the cash yesterday, staked £10,000 at 25-1 and £10,000 at 20-1, paying tax on both bets. He stands to collect £450,000.

The BBC is also planning to increase its coverage of the three-day fixture, which commences on April 3. In addition to the daily live broadcasts, there will be a 25-minute highlights package on Saturday evening to round up the day's events. And to commemorate the 150th running, the corporation is to screen a 50-minute documentary, *Grand National Tales*, providing

recollections of the fallers at every five for the last 25 years of a gaggle of giggling Singapore nightclub managers who make the annual pilgrimage; and of the man who for years interloped with jockeys leaving the weighing-room — pausing only to smile at the camera.

"My personal favourite was Bob Champion's victory on Aidaniti in 1981," recalled Lynam, in London yesterday for a private screening of the documentary. "On radio the previous year he had Bob as our pundit. To be honest, we only asked him to try and cheer him up. Evidence of his cancer was all over him and

we never thought he'd be with us 12 months later. We were all in tears — I remember not being able to talk when I was supposed to."

Richard and Mark Pitman — father and son, 18 years apart, were touched out in remarkably similar circumstances around Crisp and Garrison Savannah respectively — relive their nightmares with a light touch. And the sequence of Mark Pitman's then-girlfriend, as she watched Garrison Savannah race up that daunting run-in, vividly illustrates just how fine is the line between victory and defeat in the world's most famous steeplechase.

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The Grey Monk eyes Fairyhouse

FROM RICHARD EVANS IN DUBLIN

WITH Imperial Call, and Ungemist Missile unlikely to run, The Grey Monk is set to head the weights and lead a formidable British challenge for the Jameson Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse on Easter Monday.

Only four British-trained horses have won the race since it was first run in 1870, but yesterday's publication of the weights for the £100,000-added event saw no less than 17 British entries, including Gordon Richards's exciting chaser, who bypassed the Cheltenham Festival because of fast ground.

"The Grey Monk is an intended runner, provided the ground is okay," the Grey-stoke trainer said yesterday. "Twelve stone is not ideal but he is in great form."

David Nicholson has entered both Percy Smollett,

who should appreciate the right-handed Fairyhouse circuit, and St. Melion Fairway. Both are intended runners if there is decent ground.

Seven Towers, winner of the Midlands Grand National on Saturday, has been pencilled in along with Sister Stephanie, who finished third in the Uttoxeter race.

Mary Reveley, trainer of Seven Towers, said: "The horse will run only if it is soft because three miles five furlongs would not be a sufficient test otherwise."

Apart from the Irish National, another 20 British-trained horses are entered at the three-day meeting. Sparky Gayle, the Catholic Chase winner, and Squire Silk, runner-up in the Arkle, could take on Dorans Pride, third in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, in the Power Gold Cup.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Uttoxeter
Going: good to firm, good in places
2.20 (2m 2h) 1. Shearlin Lad (F. Reid, 5-1), 2. Star King (11-2), 3. Layli (11-2), 4. Layli (11-2), 5. Layli (11-2), 6. Layli (11-2), 7. Layli (11-2), 8. Layli (11-2), 9. Layli (11-2), 10. Layli (11-2), 11. Layli (11-2), 12. Layli (11-2), 13. Layli (11-2), 14. Layli (11-2), 15. Layli (11-2), 16. Layli (11-2), 17. Layli (11-2), 18. Layli (11-2), 19. Layli (11-2), 20. Layli (11-2), 21. Layli (11-2), 22. Layli (11-2), 23. Layli (11-2), 24. Layli (11-2), 25. Layli (11-2), 26. Layli (11-2), 27. Layli (11-2), 28. Layli (11-2), 29. Layli (11-2), 30. Layli (11-2), 31. Layli (11-2), 32. Layli (11-2), 33. Layli (11-2), 34. Layli (11-2), 35. Layli (11-2), 36. Layli (11-2), 37. Layli (11-2), 38. Layli (11-2), 39. Layli (11-2), 40. Layli (11-2), 41. Layli (11-2), 42. Layli (11-2), 43. Layli (11-2), 44. Layli (11-2), 45. Layli (11-2), 46. Layli (11-2), 47. Layli (11-2), 48. Layli (11-2), 49. Layli (11-2), 50. Layli (11-2), 51. Layli (11-2), 52. Layli (11-2), 53. Layli (11-2), 54. Layli (11-2), 55. 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Guscott does his stuff with a vengeance

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

It is a shameful thing: one of the lowest of low emotions. And consequently it is something that goes very, very deep. It is the desire to stuff it up — no, really, I am sorry for this demotic language, but there is no other way of putting it. It is a low thing, and it can only have a low name.

And yet it is one of the most powerful and compelling of all emotions, something that inflames a person with desire, something that in its discharge leaves one almost comatose with self-satisfaction.

Flashback many years: a press awards ceremony. And there is a personal devil emerging from still deeper in my past, one who shifted heaven and earth in his efforts to get rid of me, and who told me I would never work in national newspapers. "Simon," he said, rather sportingly, "Congratulations."

"Thank you," I said. "I owe it all to the way you trained me." And, being a petty person at heart — like every other human being — I glowed like the aurora borealis with self-delight.

And so I send fraternal greetings to Jeremy Guscott. Now, I have never been a member of the Guscott-is-God club: I have found him more frustrating than inspiring. Apart from a few minutes at the end of the game against Ireland, he was omitted by the *so-disant* master tactician of an England rugby union coach, Jack Rowell, for all but the final 40 minutes of the five nations' championship.

And did Guscott ever stuff it up Jack Rowell last Saturday. I have never seen him play so brilliantly, with razored incisiveness, with lethal inventiveness, with rat-trap defence. He played like a man in a cold, murderous rage. He sought to pack a full international season into those 40 minutes, and he succeeded admirably in his aim.

His aim was, it seemed, not so much to beat Wales, but the



Fired up for his belated chance to impress, Guscott bursts clear of the Wales defence during an inspired display. Photograph: Marc Aspland

still more laudable ambition of stuffing it up. He made Rowell look a fool and a blind one, a person enslaved by his own sense of self. Guscott made the rugby union world shake its head and say: "Well, if he had played all season, England would probably have beaten France." By easy and not necessarily fair stages, Guscott has made his coach look like the man who cost England a grand slam.

Sweet. From the lowest of motives, the highest of performances: "twas ever thus in sport. In football it has been elevated to the level of a guiding principle, one that the Italians call *l'immutabile legge dell'ex* — the immutable law of the ex.

Which means, if you are Mark Hughes, you are always going to score against Manchester United. A player who has known the hurt of rejection invariably scores against his old club. This is not because he knows the ways of his former colleagues and has some kind of tactical advantage, for the same principle would work against him. No. His appetite is the stronger, that's all, and that is because he is inspired by the unholy need to stuff it up.

Newcastle United and then had his nose put out as still more vast sums were paid for Alan Shearer. But Asprilla's recent Premiership performance, when promoted from the bench in Shearer's absence, have re-inspired a lost-looking side.

Meanwhile, a still more famous bench-warmer remains waiting for the day in which he will make someone suffer. Gianluca Vialli, one of

the most illustrious players in English football, spent another 85 minutes on the bench last Sunday.

"This should not be happening to a great player like this. He deserves more." This was, incredibly, Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager. "It hurts me to keep him on the subs' bench, but at the moment there is nothing I can do."

Vialli has behaved impeccably throughout this difficult

period. But at 32, there is no future in biding your time. He must be going mad. Sooner or later someone will pay for this, and it could be Chelsea, it could be Gullit.

It has been suggested that Vialli's Italy and Chelsea colleague, Gianfranco Zola, who is carrying a hip injury, needs to take a break. "I don't want to rest," he said. "If I stay well, then I feel I must play in every game. Missing some matches and playing in others is not an option for me. If I am playing well and the team is playing well, it is not wise to make changes."

No. Or you end up a long-term substitute when the team does still better without you. And all you can do is sit there, burning with the urge to stuff it up.

Stuffing it up may be a low emotion, but it brings out all of a player's most combative qualities. Qualities that will be needed by the England cricket team this summer against the rampant Australians. Does Mark Ramprakash, the brilliant Middlesex batsman last seen for England making a pair at Lord's, nurse in his heart the corrosive desire to stuff it up? If so, pick him like a shot.



Vialli, consigned to the bench again, awaits the opportunity to make someone suffer

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44

CESTUS
(a) and (b). A belt or girdle for the waist, particularly that worn by a gladiator in ancient Rome. Specifically that of Aphrodite or Venus. From the Greek *kestos* stitched. Also a contrivance consisting of thongs of bullhide, loaded with strips of iron and lead, and wound round the hands. Used by unscrupulous Roman boxers as a protection and to give greater weight to the blows. Latin *cestus*, commonly regarded as anomalously from *caedere* to beat. But probably influenced by the *girdle*.

CHAKRA
(c) A circular weapon, used by the Sikhs. From the Sanskrit for a wheel. "The chakra or chakra is a thin knife-edged ring of flat steel, a severe missile in skilled hands." Also mystic circle placed in the hands of pictured Hindu gods. In Yoga, one of the centres of spiritual and etheral power in the human body. Also the emblem on the flag of India.

CHALAZA
(d) Each of the two membranous twisted strings by which the yolk-bag of an egg is bound to the lining membrane at the ends of the shell, and kept near the middle of the albumen, with the germinating point uppermost. From the Greek word for hail, or any small lump or knot like a hail-stone.

CHANDLER'S WOBBLE
(b) A movement in the Earth's axis of rotation that causes latitude to vary with a period of 14 months. An eponym of Seth Carlo Chandler (1846-1913), an American astronomer. Chandler's discovery was facilitated by his invention of the aluminator, a device for measuring the positions of stars relative to a circle centred at the zenith rather than to the meridian.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Qd1! 2 Kg2 (2 Qxd1 Bxe4+ mating) 2... Qc2+ 3 Kh3 Bxe4 and the White position collapses.

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ICE SKATING

Russians lead dance after tough battle

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

OKSANA GRITSCHUK and Yevgeny Platov, the Olympic champions from Russia, skated into the lead of the ice dance event yesterday at the world figure skating championships after a tough battle in Lausanne. Angelika Krylova and Oleg Ovsianikov, of Russia, were second with Shae-Lynn Bourne and Victor Kraatz, of Canada, third.

The biggest surprise came when the Canadian judge made Bourne and Kraatz first in the rumba. Every other judge made Gritschuk and Platov first on their card in all dances.

"It just goes to show each judge has a different opinion," Bourne said. "I think our judge is good and honest."

"Someone finally had the guts to do something about the skating and not the hierarchy," Kraatz said. "If every judge judged according to what they saw, there would be better judging."

Gritschuk and Platov are three-time world champions and have not been defeated since the 1994 European

championships. Krylova and Ovsianikov edged into second place ahead of the Canadians, with four of seven judges placing them second. The couples tied on the first dance.

After the two compulsory ice dances, Gritschuk and Platov are established in first place. The two French couples, Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy, and Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat, were tied in fourth position.

Ottavio Cinquanta, president of the International Skating Union (ISU), said yesterday that changes to figure skating's judging system, to make it more easily understood by the public, could occur before the Winter Olympics in Japan next year. He said that amendments could take place "if we can make them within the framework of the present regulations".

However, he stressed that big changes could only be passed by the biennial ISU congress, which does not meet until mid-1998.

SKIING

Freshwater springs a surprise on champion

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN TIGNES, FRANCE

ANDREW FRESHWATER earned his first senior British title yesterday when he held off the challenge of Graham Bell, the defending champion, in the downhill, the blue ribbon event at the British national championships here yesterday.

Freshwater, 23, from Loch Insh in the Spey Valley, the leading member of the newly-established British men's downhill B team, has already halved his world ranking this season, to 110th, and has regularly skied quicker than Bell on super giant slalom and downhill courses throughout this season, notably at the world championships in Sestriere, Italy, last month.

Conditions on the course were perfect as the organisers beat the ferocious sunshine with an early start. Bell, 30, went first and skied his usual aggressive line on a course he knew more intimately than most of his opponents, having raced here since 1991. He could offer no explanations for finishing fifteenth in the international field and third in

the British national contest. Finlay Mickel, 19, from Edinburgh, who skis with Freshwater on the B team, was second.

Freshwater, who is torn between the uncertainty of waiting for National Lottery funding to continue his skiing career or securing a salary and part-time training as an RAF physical training instructor, completed the Logan Europa Cup piste in 1min 04.2sec, which put him 0.46sec clear of Mickel. Bell recorded 1min 11.05sec.

The international downhill was won by Jean-Luc Cretier, France's No 2 downhill skier, in 1min 09.64sec, with French skiers taking all of the top three places. Sophie Ormond, 17, the French-based 1995 overall champion, won the women's downhill title for the second time.

RESULTS: Downhill: Men: 1, J.L. Cretier (Fr) 1:09.64; 2, A. Demaret (Fr) 1:10.05; 3, N. Burtin (Fr) 1:10.06; 4, F. Freshwater (Loch Insh) 1:10.42; 15, G. Bell (Henley) 1:11.05. Women: 1, S. Ormond (Grand Bornand) 1:15.55; 2, N. Toraz (Sestriere) 1:15.57; 3, P. Pina (Aberdeen) 1:16.44; 6, S. Robertson (Aberdeen) 1:17.26; 8, K. Morris (York) 1:18.35.

RADIO CHOICE

A mixed hope for the future

Listen Without Prejudice. Radio 1 times vary.

The Stephen Lawrence murder and other ugly manifestations of racism have made Radio 1's annual and laudable focus on race as relevant as ever this year. By definition it is impossible to know how much good these themed programmes achieve, but the huge and young audience for Radio 1 represents the single greatest hope of making Britain a genuine multiracial society. Programmes start today and run until Saturday, dovetailing with the European Year Against Racism. Jyoti Mishra from White Town and Skin from Skunk Anansie are fronting the campaign, which includes documentary items and music written specially by a number of pop artists. This is the public service broadcasting remit at its best.

Viewing Essential. Radio 4 (FM only), 10.00am.

This series is probably not designed to mark the first anniversary of my house going on the market. Apparently there are places where houses put up for sale today are sold tomorrow, but I have never wanted to live in one of them. But in spring a series about the dreams and realities of changing one's home is somewhat timely. Moraid Devlin pries, to an astonishing extent, into the lives of four willing participants, opening cupboards in their lives and testing their relationships for dry rot. It must have felt like having the builders in. People who cannot get FM reception should visit the nearest estate agent, who is bound to be listening. Peter Barnard

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe, includes 7.30 Newsbeat 9.00 Simon Mayo 10.00am Young 2.00pm Nicky Campbell 4.00pm Kevin Greening 6.15 Newsbeat 6.30pm Evening Session with Steve Lamacq 8.30pm John Peel 10.30pm Maye Anne Hobbs includes a live session from James as part of Listen Without Prejudice. See Choice 1.00am Clare Stagg 4.00am Dave Warren

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.30am Jimmy Young 1.30pm Debbie Thompson 3.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05pm Paul Harvey 7.00pm Jim Lloyd with Folk on Two 8.00pm Boys of the Lough (4/4) 8.30 The Music of Japan (1/4) 9.00pm Ayra Shalla's Acoustic Two Cultures Persian Wars (5/8) 9.30pm Nigel Ogden 10.30pm The Jamesons 11.45pm Salt of the Earth (6/7) 12.05am Steve Macdonald 3.00am Charles Nove

RADIO 3

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00am The Magazine 12.00pm Midday with Mark 2.00pm Radio 3 Afternoon with John Peel 3.00pm Nationwide 7.00pm News Extra with Valerie Sanderson 7.20pm Trevor Brooking's Football Night Coverage of the European Cup quarter-final, second leg: FC Porto v Manchester United. Includes the results of the National Lottery 10.00pm The Baker Line 11.00pm News Extra 12.00am After Hours 2.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy Warr 7.00pm Paul Ross 9.00pm Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Loraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00pm Peter Dinkley 7.00pm Moe Dwyer Sportszone 10.00pm James White 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 4

6.00am On Air, with Paddy Goss. Includes: Musical Theatre (C) 11.45. Includes: Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky 9.00am Morning Collection, with Peter Hobbins. Includes: an Gervase (French Renaissance Dances); Bach (Two-Part Inventions); 10.00am Musical Encounters. Includes: Rameau (Overture); Dardanus; Mozart (Piano Sonata in C, K455); Copland (Appalachian Spring); Saint-Saens (Calmes des Nuits 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Henry Cowell 1.00pm Concert Briefing. Includes: Haydn (Sonata in C minor, H XVI 20); Shostakovich (52 Piano Pieces, No 32: Little Russian March, No 16: Ravens in the Olden Style; No 4: Catastrophe in the Jungle) 2.00pm Musical Choices. Includes: Bach (Toccata in C minor, BWV911); Britten (Rejoice in the Lamb)

RADIO 5

5.55am Shipping (LW) 6.00am News 6.10am Farming 6.25am Prayer 6.30am Today 8.40am Parliament 8.55am Weather 9.00am News 9.05am Midweek, with Times columnist Libby Purves 10.00am News: Viewing Essential (FM). See Choice 10.00am Daily Service (LW) 10.15pm On This Day (LW) 10.30pm Woman's Hour 11.30pm Gardeners' Question Time, with Eric Robson (P) 12.00pm News: You and Yours 12.25pm Envious Cases (2/4) 12.55pm Weather 1.00pm The World at One 1.40pm The Archers (1) 1.55pm Shipping Forecast 2.00pm News: Hinterlands 2.45pm The Vegetable Patch: Garlic. An affectionate look at the most pungent of roots (5/6) 3.00pm News: The Afternoon Shift, with Debra Bohan 4.00pm News: 4.05pm Kaleidoscope. Paul Gambaccini talks to Arthur C. Clarke about his new book, 2001, and explores the history of cinema through a multimedia stage exhibition

RADIO 4

4.45pm Short Story: Citizen's Arrest, by Charles Willard. Read by William Dufus 5.00pm PM 5.50pm Shipping Forecast 6.55pm Weather 6.55pm News 6.30pm Counterpoint (1) 7.00pm News 7.05pm The Archers 7.20pm Global Shake-out (4/4) 7.30pm The Wardrobe (4/8) (1) 8.05pm The People's Peace, Dame Ruth Reillon and Sir John Drummond reflect on the transformation of Britain's musical life (4/8) (1) 9.00pm Bird-Peeking Pulse and Three-Piece Wine (1) 9.30pm Kaleidoscope (1) 9.55pm Weather 10.00pm The World Tonight 10.45pm Book at Bedtime: The Duel, by Joseph Conrad (3/5) 11.00pm Trust (2/8) 11.30pm Seymour the Fractal Cat (FM) (5/5) (1) 11.30pm Today in Parliament (LW) 12.00pm News 12.30pm The Late Book: The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien (13/15) 12.45pm Shipping Forecast 1.00am As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.8-99.2. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.0. LW 158; MW 198 (12.45-1.00am). CLASSICAL. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. LW 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1069. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.

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officer from a child protection unit who despite her tact and charm had yet to come to terms with problems of securing a successful prosecution: "Even if you don't have a conviction there's a great stigma attached." And if that didn't press you, then perhaps the prospect of admission from the male sex worker that he did not bathe with his four-year-old daughter would be that where abuse starts — with neglect.

Finally, the one dud of the evening, *Network First* (1997), which set out to retell the well-known story of the Birmingham sisters forced into marriages in Yemen 16 years ago without checking whether they had a new ending. They did not. What they had was a crackly TV recording of the one sister still in Yemen — now 30 and the mother of six — insisting that she was not a prostitute: "He gave me a job to do, to make money to pay my other" Alas, it was a waste.

Matthew Bond



Linked together in time-honoured *Timewatch* style with modern footage of the battlefields and the faultless hindsight of a fairly partisan bunch of military historians, the contemporary accounts allowed Cran to hit both his targets: to tell the story of an often forgotten war and to show how it served as a ghastly rehearsal for what was to follow.

The sexual abuse of children seems rarely off our screens at the moment. Three weeks ago the great debate was whether Peter Kosminsky's *No Child of Mine* was the story of the serial abuse of a 12-year-old girl, was true or not. The matter, as I recall, was never satisfactorily resolved.

Now such problems, I suspect, await William L. G. (1990-1991) (Channel 4). That's because the starting point for Leanne Klein's absorbing film was basically that shared by unmyriad middle-class dinner parties — that actually there's not much child abuse around, but there are an awful lot of interfering busybodies trying to prove otherwise and doing immense damage to family relationships in the process.

Klein was more impartial than the ordinary world suggest. She gave social workers and the police the chance to tell their story, just as she did the family whose lives have

been permanently blighted by a remark made by a three-year-old to her playground leader. Dad had committed the unpardonable crime of not being very good at wiping his daughter's bottom. At social services, the police, the FBI, Big Brother disaster.

What she most telling revealed were the structural weaknesses in an unarguably well-intentioned system, particularly the fact that everything appears to be kept in file. Of the 1,000 families investigated each week, only one in seven is found to be "at risk." That leaves six out of seven struggling to rebuild lives that could have been disrupted by a single malicious call or misinterpreted remark. But the hurt fades, doesn't it?


No, said the mother, the family's pride and the main cause of the problem. "It's all right, it never will be right," Dad said, the freest

officer from a child protection unit who despite her tact and charm had yet to come to terms with problems of securing a successful prosecution: "Even if you don't have a conviction there's a great stigma attached." And if that didn't press you, then perhaps the prospect of admission from the male sex worker that he did not bathe with his four-year-old daughter would be that where abuse starts — with neglect.

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CHINA

6.00am Sesame Street (54938)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (53068)
9.00 Bewitched (1) (92884)
9.30 Schools: Good Health (T) (90388)
Book Box (T) 10.00 Stage Two Six
Glass (1) (T) 10.18 The French
Programme 10.25 Irish Scientists
Inventors: John Clarke, Tatties,
and Prates 10.55 Mathsbook 11.15
Animals, Gilbert's Potaroo 11.15
(T) 11.30 Rat-A-Tat-Tat 11.45
Edition
12.00 Home to Home (85548)
2.30pm Baby It's You (4/6) (T) (77
1.00 Ellen Audrey and Ellen throw a he
for Page (T) (56155) 1.30 Hand to
(48607567) 1.35 Through the
Ceiling, narrated by Alan Be
(8205800)
1.55 Drive a Crooked Road (1954, b
Mickey Rooney, Dianne Foster. A
about a mechanic and racing dr
is led astray by a woman and her
gangster boyfriend. Directed by H
Guine (T) (89812109)
3.30 Collectors' Lot (T) (161) 4.00 Fift
One (T) (628) 4.30 Countdown (T)
5.00 Rock (T) (T) (7635) 5.15
Rescue (T) (432) 6.00 Fairy of t
1967) 6.50 Fresh Pop (85316)
Channel 4 News (T) (738242)
7.55 Black Holes of Science Why h
failed to apply evolutionary princ
our own thought processes? (25
8.30 Brookside (T) (3819)
9.30 **Police** An Inspector Calls: S
Investigations The v
trading standards officers (T) (94
9.00 **Police** Countryside Under
Either Harvest Life for
farmworkers in England (T) (4906
9.30 **Fortran** TV Father Lionel Fas
presents more tales of the
including an attempt to recreate
animals and a 35,000-year-old
who has returned to hold class
Seattle (T) (29428)



Anthony Edwards stars (10)

10.00 ER: Night Shift Medical drama
Mark Greene (Anthony Edwards) i
parades his career but finds some
work; and somebody knows about
and Keaton (T) (6664)
10.00 Friends Nealon (Gibber)'s sister,
Candace, guest-stars as a minist
officials at Ross's former wife's
wedding (T) (89451)

1.30 Cheers The rivalry between Cheers and Cheers in Action intensifies at Gary's Old Town Tavern. (22600)

2.00 Under the Moon Sports made for TV. (215339)

2.30am NBA XXL American basketball. (73681)

3.00 Schools: Scientific Eyes (T) (14535)

3.35 Tornadoes (R501778). Ends at 6.

CHALLENGE[illegible]



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RUGBY UNION 44

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Fans' behaviour under scrutiny

United need peace and prosperity

FROM ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN OPORTO

AS Manchester United's flight circled Oporto airport yesterday, held up in the traffic swelled by the team's 10,000 travelling supporters, Alex Ferguson, the manager, reflected on the modicum of caution it is his duty to instil.

"We don't want to do anything silly," he opined. "It would take a tremendously inspired performance by Porto to win this tie now. But they will have their pride, they will come out looking for that early goal, and we will have to be professional, to do our job properly."

That said, the mission is, of course, well in hand. But taking a four-goal lead to a team whose supporters are as passionate as any in Europe does not invite complacency. History rules it out, for 19 years ago, in this very stadium, United lost 4-0.

Nevertheless, England needs two victories tonight. Not since 1985, the year of Heysel, have the English champions reached the semi-finals of the European Cup, nor have so many English supporters been abroad to follow their club since then.

They must beware the intoxication of glory. It was there in both airports yesterday. As the United players filed through the customs lounge in Manchester they walked into a throng of backslapping supporters, many of them already reeking of drink. And as they disembarked after the 25-hour flight to northern Portugal, where the temperatures approached 25C, the hordes were there again.

One of them, entertainingly enough, took a ride on the baggage carousel, filming the players and directors on a camcorder as he was carried by. So far, so good. But in the stadium tonight there will be

450 police and outside it there will be many more forces of the law, including armed units specially flown in from Lisbon. That old, dangerous cocktail, Latin chaos and the English reputation for violence, is coming together.

For the most part, these supporters will be just what United need in the Estadio das Antas. They will pit their voices against the 40,000 home fans in the 50,000-capacity stadium.

The British Embassy is hoping for peace but knows that only 6,400 of United's

Trafford two weeks ago, he now shuns even his own press, taking Porto out of town.

Oliveira is a man beleaguered. For two thirds of this season his team was omnipotent, uncatchable in the Portuguese league and conquerors of AC Milan in the Champions' League. In 27 games at home and abroad, Porto had conceded 12 goals; but before, during and after the meeting with United, their nerve broke. In their next five games, the defence shipped another 12.

Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa, the president of the club, called upon the citizens of Oporto to regard defeat in England as exaggerated and not an occasion for "inconsequent despair". Speaking for his hidden coach, the president was well aware that another home defeat, following last Friday, when Porto succumbed to Sporting Lisbon, their arch rivals, for the first time in 21 years on their own ground, will bring the club under even more intense scrutiny.

The rest of the country has grown tired of Porto's supremacy. In Lisbon, they are only too eager to believe all manner of allegations about Porto's bribery of referees, including one relating to the semi-final of the Cup Winners' Cup in 1984, when they defeated Aberdeen. That Aberdeen team was managed by Ferguson. If vengeance is any part of his motivation on this visit, one would not detect it. Ferguson has other things, such as a pulled hamstring, a damaged ankle and a thigh muscle strain on his mind.

He is unlikely to start with Andy Cole, whose form lately has been the best of his United career, because why should United risk a goalscorer whose left thigh is sore? Indeed, the emphasis will be on containing the Portuguese pride and passion in midfield. Gary Neville trained last night and appears ready to play despite two stitches in a swollen ankle, but Ryan Giggs, who probably gave the performance of his life in tearing Porto asunder two weeks ago, has a hamstring strain and may not be risked.

Hence Ferguson may use Jordi Cruyff on the left of midfield. But, no matter, it is for Porto to rediscover their threat and to overcome the palpable fear which Hilario, their goalkeeper, admits he felt in advance of meeting Cantona and Co the first time.

Dichio departs, page 45
Midweek View, page 46

TEAMS

FC PORTO (probable, 4-4-1-1): Hilario — J. Pinto, Alarico, J. Costa, F. Mendos — Edmilson, Peziniho Santos, Barrosa, L. Delgado — Z. Zebaze — J. L. L. L.

MANCHESTER UNITED (probable, 4-4-1-1): P. Schmeichel — G. Neville, D. May, G. Patterson, D. Keane — D. Beckham, N. Keane, H. Cantona — O. O. Solskjaer.

Referee: K. Nkelon (Denmark).

fans have been allocated tickets for the area of the ground earmarked for them. The rest are either in possession of tickets for the FC Porto stands (acquired from rogue travel agents and touts), or hoping to buy them on the streets.

Let us hope that the match remains the focal point. Ferguson can relax as much as his combative nature will allow, for the pressure is on his opponent. Yesterday Antonio Oliveira, the successor to Bobby Robson as the Porto coach, had gone to ground. Having incurred a £5,000 fine for refusing to meet the media after the humiliation at Old



The Manchester United players were in relaxed mood as they arrived at Oporto airport yesterday. Photograph: Alex Livesey/Allsport

Klinsmann may prove Royle attraction

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

JURGEN KLINSMANN, the Germany captain, announced yesterday that he will be leaving Bayern Munich at the end of the season. The surprise move is sure to alert English clubs and lead to increased speculation that he could return to the FA Carling Premiership that he graced with Tottenham Hotspur two seasons ago.

Klinsmann, 32, is unlikely to return to White Hart Lane, which he left only 12 months into his two-year contract. His premature departure, after he had scored 29 goals, proved bitter and acrimonious, with Alan Sugar, the Tottenham chairman, claiming that he had been betrayed.

Although Klinsmann is understood to have had offers to play in Spain, Everton and Nottingham Forest could also join the chase. Each has

substantial transfer funds at its disposal and Joe Royle, the Everton manager, has long been an admirer of the much-travelled forward.

Royle flew to Germany to watch him play for Bayern in the Bundesliga recently and is keen to strengthen a side that lacks a consistent goalscorer. He is also believed to be preparing an improved offer for Trevor Sinclair, the Queens Park Rangers winger.

Klinsmann has decided to invoke a clause in his contract, which is not due to expire until June next year, that allows him to leave on a free transfer at the end of the season. He has become disillusioned with the bickering at the club and at criticism from Franz Beckenbauer, the Bayern chairman, and Lothar Matthaus, the club captain.

"I had a talk with Beckenbauer last week and told him I would probably go

abroad next season," Klinsmann, who has also played for Stuttgart, Internazionale and AS Monaco, said yesterday. "I don't seem to fit in here. I wanted to tell Bayern now so that they can plan for the future."

Beckenbauer, who played the key role in bringing Klinsmann back to Germany,



Klinsmann: disillusioned

said: "It's a shame. We wanted to keep Jurgen a lot longer. But it's his decision and we have to accept it."

George Graham's troubled reign as manager of Leeds United hit a new low yesterday when Carlton Palmer, the former England midfielder player, made a transfer request and Tony Yeboah was fined and told to lose weight.

Yeboah, the Ghana striker, was fined two weeks' pay for ripping off his shirt and throwing it at Graham when he was substituted in the 1-0 Premiership defeat by Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Saturday.

Graham would not disclose the amount of the fine. "That will remain private but I have told Tony to get back to his playing weight," Graham said. "That means he will have to lose just under a stone. I've looked at the weight he was when he came here and the

weight he is now and he has quite a bit to lose."

Palmer, 31, a £2.6 million signing from Sheffield Wednesday in 1994, was booed by supporters during the draw goalless draw at home to Southampton last week and was left out of the team for the Tottenham match.

His written transfer request will go before the board of directors with Graham's recommendation. "What I will be recommending remains private," Graham said, "but I am not surprised by his request."

Andrei Kanchelskis, the former Manchester United and Everton winger, is reported to be unsettled at Fiorentina, the club he joined from Everton only two months ago. "He has been catapulted into a new world and is obviously handicapped by the language problem," Luciano Luna, the Fiorentina managing director, said.

Scottish clubs benefit by £7.25m

BY MARK SOUSTER

AFTER one of their worst seasons in the five nations' championship, which included three record defeats, Scotland face the prospect of permanent relegation to the second division of world rugby by union unless drastic action is taken to bolster the domestic game.

Duncan Paterson, the Scottish Rugby Union's covenor of rugby, outlined his concerns at Murrayfield yesterday as the union announced plans to put £7.25 million, largely from income from the sale of tele-

vision rights, into club rugby over the next three years as part of its commitment to develop the game on a three-tier basis.

However, the vehicle for international success will remain professional districts, each with its own administration, professional coaches — who will be announced in a fortnight — and ultimately its own stadium.

Unless results improve in the European Cup next season via Scotland's three representatives, Caledonia, Scottish

Borders and Glasgow, Paterson believes that Scotland will be squeezed out of the competition, with dire consequences.

"We are hanging on by our fingernails," Paterson said. "Ten or 12 clubs in England and France want our places in Europe now. If that happens we could slide into oblivion. What we are trying to do is have a three-tier system and fast-track as fast as possible to ensure our international survival."

Five nations' threat, page 44

Whiff of revolution in air at Sussex

Pat Gibson finds entrenched positions that promise a stormy annual meeting

THE date has been set, the manifesto issued, the battle lines drawn. And tonight the voters of one of the most conservative constituencies in the land will turn out in large numbers to show whether they really do believe that it is time for a change.

Not the general election, but something of far greater importance to those who care about such things as the annual meeting of Sussex County Cricket Club, whose members have been roused from their deck-chairs by their former fast bowler, Tony Pigott, who has a vision of the future and the soundbites to go with it.

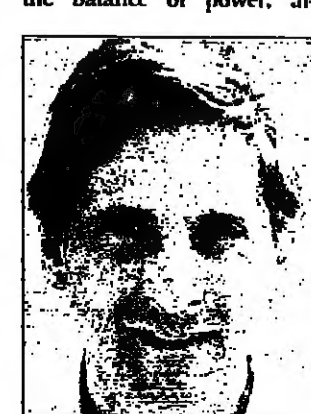
His resolution, calling for a vote of no confidence in the committee and their immediate resignation en bloc, may not be tabled until a special meeting, which he has forced on April 8. However, if the annual meeting — switched from the county ground at Hove to Brighton's Grand Hotel because of the expected turnout — is hostile towards them, they may have no alternative but to go.

Like John Major, Ken Hopkins, the chairman, is turning a blind eye to the opinion polls. "As far as I am concerned," he said, "we were elected by the membership to serve for three years and in my case I will not seek re-election until February next year. If the vote goes against us at the special meeting, that will be a different matter."

Hopkins, 63, a retired retail manager with Seaboard, took over only 12 days ago when Alan Caffyn was forced to resign after blaming Alan Wells, the county captain who was dismissed in October, for the turmoil that included Wells's departure along with five other capped players — Ed Giddins, Ian Salisbury, Danny Law, Martin Speight and Jamie Hall.

Hopkins has the support of two members of the committee, his vice-chairman, Alan Wadley, and the club's surgeon, Frank Horan, but three

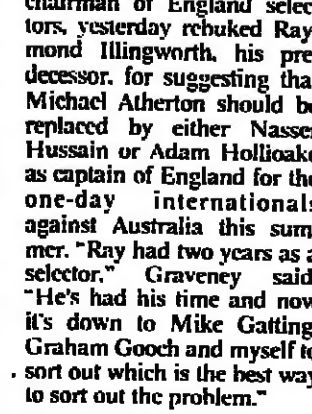
more who have only just been elected — Robin Marlar, a former captain, Jim May, a Brighton businessman, and Dick Holste, a long-serving member — have declared their support for Pigott's manifesto, suitably entitled Sussex 2000. This leaves another former captain, John Barclay as the floating voter holding the balance of power, although it was suggested last night that he was drifting towards the old guard.



Barclay: key player

A meeting between Hopkins and Pigott did little to help. "We did find some common ground in that we both care about Sussex," Pigott said. "Where we differ is that so far no one has actually taken responsibility for what has happened at the club and no one, apart from myself, has actually stood up to be counted."

David Graveney, the new chairman of England selectors, yesterday rebuked Raymond Illingworth, his predecessor, for suggesting that Michael Atherton should be replaced by either Nasser Hussain or Adam Hoggie as captain of England for the one-day internationals against Australia this summer. "Ray had two years as a selector," Graveney said. "He's had his time and now it's down to Mike Gatting, Graham Gooch and myself to sort out which is the best way to sort out the problem."



Naked officialdom, page 5

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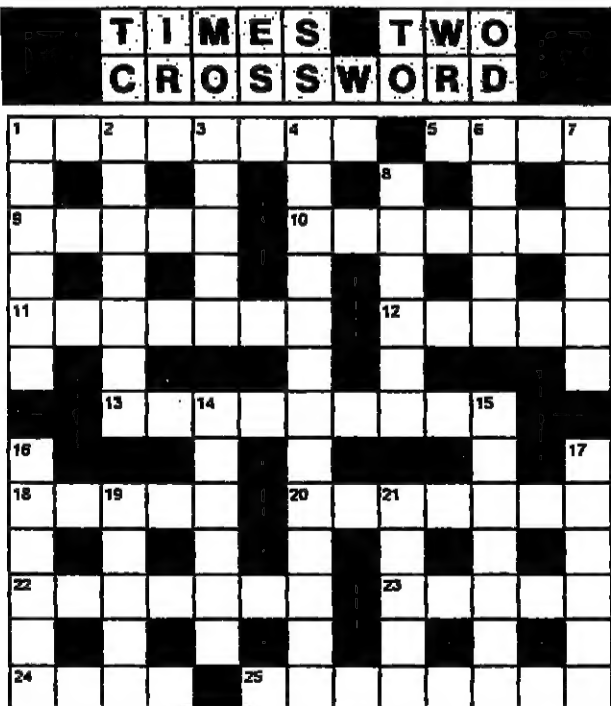
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 - Instrument; flower (5)
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 - Trend; inclination (4)
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